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OUR
GREATEST LIVING SOLDIERS

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FIELD-MARSHAL VISCOUNT WOLSELEY.

OUR GREATEST LIVING SOLDIERS

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BY

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FOREWORD

THE following chapters originally appeared as a series of articles in newspapers, and must therefore be judged by that standard. They have been thought worthy of reproduction in their present form in view of the profound public interest in everything connected with the Army which has been created by our war in South Africa.

C. L.

CONSTITUTIONAL CLUB :
January 15, 1900.

CONTENTS

CHAPTER		PAGE
I.	FIELD-MARSHAL THE RT. HON. VISCOUNT WOLSELEY, K.P., G.C.B., G.C.M.G., &C. (COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF OF THE BRITISH ARMY)	1
II.	GENERAL THE RT. HON. SIR REDVERS HENRY BULLER, V.C., G.C.B., K.C.M.G. .	20
III.	FIELD-MARSHAL LORD ROBERTS OF KANDAHAR, V.C., G.C.B., G.C.S.I., &C. . .	36
IV.	GENERAL SIR HENRY EVELYN WOOD, V.C., G.C.B., G.C.M.G. (ADJUTANT-GENERAL TO THE FORCES)	54
V.	LIEUTENANT-GENERAL SIR GEORGE WHITE, V.C., G.C.B., G.C.I.E., &C. . . .	69
VI.	FIELD-MARSHAL SIR DONALD MARTIN STEWART, BART., G.C.B., G.C.S.I., C.I.E. .	86
VII.	MAJOR-GENERAL LORD KITCHENER OF KHARTOUM, K.C.B., K.C.M.G.	102
VIII.	MAJOR-GENERAL HECTOR ARCHIBALD MACDONALD, C.B., D.S.O., A.D.C. . .	120
IX.	TWO ROYAL DUKES	140
X.	A GROUP OF GENERALS	159

PORTRAITS

FIELD-MARSHAL VISCOUNT WOLSELEY . . *Frontispiece*

GENERAL SIR REDVERS BULLER . . . *to face p.* 20

FIELD-MARSHAL LORD ROBERTS . . . „ 36

GENERAL SIR EVELYN WOOD . . . . „ 54

LIEUT.-GENERAL SIR GEORGE WHITE . . „ 70

FIELD-MARSHAL SIR DONALD STEWART . . „ 86

MAJOR-GENERAL LORD KITCHENER . . „ 102

MAJOR-GENERAL HECTOR MACDONALD . . „ 120

OUR GREATEST LIVING SOLDIERS

CHAPTER I

FIELD-MARSHAL THE RT. HON. VISCOUNT WOLSELEY, K.P., G.C.B., G.C.M.G., &c.

(Commander-in-Chief of the British Army)

IRELAND has contributed to the British army many first-rate fighting men of high and low degree, and, of the former class, few more distinguished than the army's present Commander-in-Chief. Yet Lord Wolseley is not an Irishman in the sense, for example, that Daniel O'Connell was one. That is to say, his lordship by descent is not a pure Irish Celt, but an English Saxon, just as was the Duke of Wellington; and it has been well said that a man does not become a horse by being born in a stable. Of a very old Staffordshire family, which produced many fine soldiers—one of whom fought under

Dutch William at the Boyne and settled in Carlow—Lord Wolseley, like the Duke of Wellington, is of pure English descent, though he has undoubtedly imbibed some of the characteristics which are typically Irish, and which were never assimilated by the Iron Duke: imagination, quick intelligence, mastery of words as well as of war, sympathy, vivacity, and also just a touch of that charming vein of personal vanity without which no Hibernian hero would be perfect. It is possible, indeed, that though the two men were essentially different in temperament, the hero of Waterloo and the victor of Tel-el-Kebir were of the same original family stock—Wolseley, like Wesley, being but a variant of Wellesley; and between John, the founder of the Methodists, and Arthur, the conqueror of the great Napoleon, there was distant family kinship.

'Man is as a wolf to his fellow man' is the motto of the Wolseleys; but the subject of this character-sketch commenced his career more like a lion than a wolf; and, indeed, he might well have substituted for his family motto the advice which he once gave to the cadets of Sandhurst: 'If you want to get on, you

must try to get killed.' That was precisely what young Garnet Wolseley himself did when, as a stripling of twenty, he went out in 1853 to the Burmese war as an ensign in the 50th Foot, now 2nd battalion of the South Staffordshire regiment, recruited from the very county which had been the cradle of his English race. Volunteering to lead a storming party against the strong stockaded position of the rebel Myat-toon he was struck down by a large iron jingall which mangled his thigh, though the example he had shown his men carried them on to victory.

Invalided home he exchanged into the 90th Foot—now the 2nd battalion of the Scottish (Cameronian) Rifles—a regiment which had been raised by Graham of Lynedoch during the Peninsula war, and known as the 'Perthshire Greybreeks.' An Anglo-Saxon by race, born in Ireland, Garnet Wolseley had received his baptism of fire in an English battalion and then proceeded to the winning of his spurs in a Scottish regiment which, as it had already had the honour of producing one Commander-in-Chief in the person of Viscount Hill, was also destined to nurse into distinction another and still more

illustrious head of the army—a double honour which can be claimed by no other corps in the service.

It was with the burly 'Greybreeks' of Graham that Lieutenant Wolseley now found his eager way to the frozen trenches before Sebastopol, ere yet he had wholly recovered from the terrible thigh wound inflicted on him among the malarious jungles of sun-broiled Burmah. In the trenches he undertook engineer duty for his battalion, and so distinguished himself that he was advanced to the rank of captain, his promotion being cancelled by the horrified authorities on their discovering that the object of their generous recognition was barely twenty-two! Wolseley threatened to resign his commission if he were not reinstated, and he carried his point.

The Duke of Wellington used to say that a commander was no earthly good unless he could intuitively divine the designs of the enemy 'on the other side of a hill,' and this was what young Wolseley showed himself quick at doing with brilliant success before Sebastopol, his only dangerous rival in this respect being an equally juvenile

lieutenant of engineers, Charles Gordon by name, who was afterwards to win at once the hero's and the martyr's crown on the blood-stained battlements of Khartoum, unattainable, alas! by his old comrade of the Crimea. Wolseley was always getting himself knocked about by bullets, shells, and explosive showers of battery débris in this awful siege of the modern Troy, but try as he would he could not manage to get killed.

At last, after countless perils and narrow shaves 'in the imminent deadly breach,' and after passing unscathed from the icy clutches of 'Marshal Février'—which were far more fatal to our troops than even the batteried hell-fire perpetually rained upon them by Marshal Menchikoff—Captain Wolseley very nearly attained the object of his ambition towards the end of the siege when a round shot killed two sappers at his side and, striking a gabion, overwhelmed him with such a shower of stones and gravel that he was regarded as dead. 'He's a dead 'un,' said the surgeon after a glance at Wolseley's form and features, which were 'no longer distinguishable as those of a human being;' but Wolseley, turning himself as he lay all

mangled and smothered in blood, was quick to answer, 'I am worth a good many dead men yet.' Contrary to all medical experience he recovered from his wounds and returned home, but with one eye only—like Nelson—a breast covered with medals, and a body covered with wounds scarcely less serious than those which were afterwards to compel the French General de Gallifet to replace his ribs with a silver plate.

Having thus, maimed in body yet magnified in fame, escaped the perils of fire, Captain Wolseley was now in danger of succumbing to the dangers of water. For on his way out to China—the area of duty for a British soldier being so vast and various—he and his gallant 'Greybreeks' were wrecked on a coral reef in the Straits of Malacca; and but for some weevily biscuits and roast monkey, on which they managed to subsist for several days, they would only have escaped death by drowning to yield to the still crueller form of death by hunger. The ship which at last picked them up brought the terrible news of the Indian Mutiny, and so, at once altering their course from Hong Kong to Calcutta, the 'Greybreeks' reached India just in time

to join the banner of their countryman, Sir Colin Campbell, on his glorious forced march for the relief of Lucknow.

To Major Wolseley, at the head of the devoted band of 'Greybreeks' with whom he had heroically stormed the Mess House, fell the proud distinction of being the first man of the relieving force to give his hand to the beleaguered garrison, though the honour of having planted the British flag on the Mess House—an honour long ascribed to him—was in reality due to Lieut. Roberts, a young artillery officer on the staff of Hope Grant, whose place was taken by Wolseley towards the end of the war. But though, in the race of rivalry which had now begun between these two ambitious young officers, 'Little Bobs' was the first to plant his Sovereign's flag on the roof of the Mess House at Lucknow, Wolseley was destined to be the first, in the race for fame, to place his own banner on the roof of the Horse Guards in Whitehall; while, on the other hand, if Wolseley was doomed to fail in his endeavour to reach and relieve Khartoum, the more fortunate Roberts was fated to have his name inscribed on the golden tablets of

military history as the executor of a momentous and ever-memorable march from Kabul to Kandahar—such were the compensations offered by fortune to the eager rivals for military renown.

It was on the staff of Hope Grant that Wolseley again served with distinction in the Chinese campaign of 1860, when he was present at the taking of the Taku forts, and the burning and looting of the Summer Palace—a campaign of which he published a well-written account; and so eager was he to study the political and military condition of the East that he now employed his leisure in travelling extensively through China, and even made a flying trip to Japan. Facile with his pen he was no less accomplished with his brush, and on returning home he utilised his leave of absence by proceeding to Paris to perfect himself in the use of water-colours. The true soldier of the scientific kind finds much to learn in peace as the complement of what he has learned in war; and, even when he is not fighting himself, he takes every opportunity of watching how others do it. Thus it was that when Wolseley, now a Lieut.-Colonel, was sent out

to Canada as a special service officer, under the Quartermaster-General, to help in organising the military resources of the Dominion in view of a possible rupture with the United States in consequence of the 'Trent affair,' he utilised the leave which had been granted him when all danger of an Anglo-American conflict was over by making a secret and very hazardous visit to the head-quarters of the Confederates, in order to study the art of war under General Lee—a commander of whom he thought so highly as to assign him a place next to Napoleon.

The lessons of the Civil War in America made a profound and enduring impression on Colonel Wolseley, who was ever as eager as he was open-minded to learn; and that he had now attained to something like mastery in the art of war was proved a little later (1870) when, in his thirty-seventh year, he received his first independent command —that of the Red River expedition, which had become necessary to quell the rising of Louis Riel, a French-Italian rebel, in Manitoba. Riel fled and no fighting had to be done, but none the less brilliant as a masterpiece of organisation, which might have

moved the admiration of Cæsar, was Wolseley's leading of 1,700 men with all their supplies across pathless swamps and virgin forests, and down roaring, cataract-broken rivers for six hundred miles into the western wilderness to Fort Garry, which he reached without the loss of a single man, only four and twenty hours later than he had calculated on leaving Toronto. Such a brilliant feat of strategy was well worth the honour of knighthood which awaited him on his return to England.

Wolseley had previously passed from the wind-swept plateau of the Crimea to the sun-scorched plains of India; and now it behoved him to exchange the bracing air of the Canadian forests for the fever-reeking atmosphere of African swamps. England had found it necessary to hurl from his skull-supported throne the barbarous and bloody king of Ashanti, and the hero of the Red River expedition was selected as the instrument of her long-armed power. 'A stately little gentleman of proud military bearing,' wrote a war-correspondent (H. M. Stanley) who was afterwards to perform wonders of derring-do in the opening up of the Dark

Continent, 'quick bright eye, broad high forehead, ardent temperament, a sparkling vivacious intelligence animating every feature.' Great were the difficulties of this military expedition—pathless forests, insufficient forces, malarial jungles and marshes—a region of the unknown and the terrible; but with his handful of British and West Indian troops, aided by special service officers of signal merit, Sir Garnet, though suffering from the effects of fever, penetrated to Coomassie, after several days' fighting, and struck the monarch from his Moloch throne: a feat for which he received the rank of Major-General and the Order of the Bath from the Queen, a grant of 25,000*l.* from Parliament, and a sword of honour from the City of London.

Recognising Sir Garnet's genius for administration as well as for war, Lord Beaconsfield—a keen judge of character as well as of means to end—had sent 'our only General,' as he had now come to be called, to our newly acquired island of Cyprus with the mission of setting this Mediterranean house of ours in order; and from this Augean-stable cleansing work Wolseley was

suddenly despatched to South Africa to restore to our arms the lustre which had been blurred by the assegais of the Zulus—but only to find that his task had been anticipated by the crowning victory of Lord Chelmsford over the heroic hordes of Cetewayo at Ulundi. Nevertheless, as Lord High Commissioner for South-Eastern Africa, Sir Garnet did some notable work in the restoration of order among the conflicting races of that region; and in order that imagery should complete the works of arms, he solemnly assured the Boers, in language borrowed more from Hindu than from Hibernian poetry, that 'as long as the sun shone and the Vaal river flowed to the sea, the Transvaal would remain British territory'—an assurance which was soon after to be stultified by the policy of Mr. Gladstone, whom, as a statesman, he distrusted and disliked.

But Sir Garnet's next prophecy, expressed in language of a far less florid kind, was destined to literal fulfilment in a wonderful manner. Before leaving London for Egypt in 1882, he had opened a map, and, pointing to Tel-el-Kebir, said that he would

there engage and beat the army of the rebel Pasha, Arabi, on September 13, and he kept his word to the very letter. His army of about forty thousand men, gathered swiftly from all parts of the Empire, was marshalled with an astonishing celerity which moved the admiration of foreign critics; and the campaign, which was a gem of foresight, adaptation of means to end, and perfection in all its parts, lasted only five and twenty days. It was opened by a manœuvre which will rank among the most famous and effective of recorded *ruses de guerre.*

In order to deceive Arabi as to his true line of advance, and thus divide and distract the rebel Egyptians, Sir Garnet made a feint of disembarking his troops at Alexandria; and then, re-embarking them swiftly over-night, whisked them round to Ismalia in the middle of the Suez Canal, whence they marched, fighting several actions by the way, against Arabi's strongly entrenched position at Tel-el-Kebir. After a silent night march through the starlit desert, this position was brilliantly carried by the bayonet just as dawn was breaking on the prophesied September 13; Drury Lowe's cavalry

pushed on and seized Cairo, Arabi surrendered, and the masterpiece of a campaign was over—a campaign for which its author received a peerage (Baron Wolseley of Cairo), the rank of General 'for distinguished service in the field,' and the grateful thanks of Parliament, with substantial cash in proportion.

But his next campaign in Egypt, which nevertheless brought him the higher title of Viscount, was not crowned with the same success. Roberts had in the meantime relieved Kandahar, but his rival in fame failed to reach Khartoum and relieve Gordon. The task was a colossal one, weighted with inherent difficulties and dangers of all kinds—especially of time and space, and it may be doubted whether any other commander would have advanced further on the path of its almost impossible solution than was done by Lord Wolseley. Had Wolseley selected the Suakim-Berber instead of the Nile route, he might have reached Khartoum in time to save the hero-martyr who held it so long and nobly for England's sake. Wolseley may possibly have thus been guilty of an initial mistake of

judgment; but, if so, it was the only mistake of the kind that he ever committed, just as it was also the first time, in the course of a long and brilliant career, that he had been baulked of his purpose in the field.

But from active service in the field he was now to retire, apparently for good, in order to exchange the wielding of the compelling sword for the wielding of the administrative pen. Hitherto he had spent his life in fighting the foreign enemies of England, and now he was called upon to devote his days to the combating of her equally dangerous domestic foes in the shape of the ignorance, the stupidity, the indifference, and the perverse conservatism which stood in the way of military reform. In the intervals of his field-service Lord Wolseley had already been associated with the chief departments of the War Office, and after the Nile campaign he resumed his duties as Adjutant-General, a post which enabled him to stand forth as the champion of reform as against the representatives of what he often sneered at as 'the bow and arrow period.'

This post he held till 1890, when he was

appointed Commander-in-Chief in Ireland; and five years later, on the retirement of the Duke of Cambridge, he attained the very highest peak of his profession, at the age of sixty-two, by being nominated to the Horse Guards, when he was quick to boast that the War Office could rank a couple of Army Corps complete upon our quays before the Admiralty could furnish transports to ship them across the sea. New brooms proverbially sweep clean; yet if the truth must be told there are few of the reforms which have made the British army what it now is that were not initiated under, if not by, the unjustly abused and very badly used Duke of Cambridge.

At the same time, it must be said for Lord Wolseley that in the matter of the military reforms which he aimed at on succeeding to the Horse Guards he has never enjoyed a perfectly free hand. It is known that he has been hampered to a most irritating degree by what is known as the civil side of the War Office, or, in other words, by the Secretary of State for War, to a degree which has repeatedly caused him to think of resigning an office which he could not altogether fill to his

own complete satisfaction. But, on the other hand, it is equally well known that to his untiring energy and administrative genius was mainly due the machine-like mobilisation and despatch of the troops who were sent to assert the supremacy of the Queen over all South Africa. The initial course of the war with this object certainly revealed grave and disastrous defects in the artillery armament and field transport of our troops; but when the time comes—as come it must—for apportioning the blame of the administrative blunders which proved so fatal to our brave and devoted soldiers, and so humiliating to the British nation, it will most probably be found to lie less on the military than on the civil side of the War Office.

Lord Wolseley is a brilliant man of many parts: soldier, artist, politician, courtier—with a taste and talent for something that his foes have called intrigue—and man of letters. He is the author of several well-written military works, and even of a novel. But his fame as a writer will mainly rest on his 'Life of Marlborough;' and certainly the hero of Blenheim has been fortunate in finding a biographer in the victor of Tel-el-

Kebir. Military biographies, as a rule, do not rank high in the scale of literary merit. For either they are written by civilians unfamiliar with the art of war, or by soldiers innocent of the art of words. But no one needs to be told that the author of *The Soldier's Pocket Book*—to speak of nothing else from his pen—is a master of style which might well serve as a model of lucidity and directness to the professional *littérateur*. And as for the war-correspondent—whom Lord Wolseley once described as the 'curse of modern armies,' albeit he has contributed much to the fame of modern commanders, including himself—he may, in the biography of Marlborough, come across vivid bits of word-painting which would even adorn the letters of a Russell or a Forbes. In one other respect his lordship may claim professional kinship with the 'curse of modern armies,' for the latter have to do their intellectual work when physically at their worst. And that is precisely the condition under which Lord Wolseley himself has piled up his *magnum opus* about Marlborough, which was written, he says, 'at the odd moments of leisure in a busy life, on board ship, in camp,

and often at long intervals of time, when on duty abroad and in the field.' Some men have utilised the shaving minutes of the morning in the learning of a new language; and, in saving up the odds and ends of his busy life, Lord Wolseley has added a new gem to his coronet by enriching our literature with an historical work of the first importance.

CHAPTER II

GENERAL THE RT. HON. SIR REDVERS HENRY BULLER, V.C., G.C.B., K.C.M.G.

DEVONSHIRE, the county of cream, has well been called the cream of counties from the number of illustrious men and history-makers it has produced; and it is still as prolific of sailors and soldiers as it was in the time of Drake and Raleigh, and the other west-country paladins of the good Queen Bess. But none of the living sons of illustrious Devonshire have attained to greater distinction than the subject of this chapter, who was primarily entrusted with the command of the army, the largest which ever left our shores, for establishing the paramountcy of the Queen over all South Africa. For this purpose no better man, as it seemed, could have been selected than Sir Redvers Buller, V.C., a man whose experience of soldiering in all its branches, whose proved

Photo: Knight, Aldershot.

GENERAL SIR REDVERS BULLER.

qualities of courage, coolness, energy, insight, organising and administrative power, whose force of character and special knowledge of South African warfare marked him clearly out, as the holder of such a high, honourable, and responsible command, to be the right man in the right place in the opinion of all who know him best.

The scion of a very old Devonshire family, Redvers Buller, in his nineteenth year, procured a commission in the 60th Rifles, 2nd battalion; and soon after he was fortunate enough to receive his baptism of fire at the taking of the Taku forts—a campaign from which he returned home with a medal and two clasps. But it was not till ten years later that he had another opportunity of showing the stuff of which he was made, and of stumbling on the high road to fame. As good luck would have it, his battalion was included in the Red River expedition, and the fine soldierly qualities of Captain Buller attracted the particular attention of Colonel Wolseley, its commander, who has ever had a keen and unerring eye for the men who best could serve him. Wolseley has often been accused of having a 'ring,' 'gang,' or 'set' of personal

favourites to whom he ever gave the plums of service under himself; but the claims of those favourites to his preference have always been based on pre-eminent military merit.

In the case of Buller the favour of his chief must have been all the more impartial, as the personal characteristics of the two men, who had been cast in totally different moulds, were almost antagonistic. Wolseley is of slight but compact and elegant build, vivacious, sociable, sparkling, swift-darting, polished, courtier-like, suggestive more of celerity than of strength—a soldier of the physical and even intellectual mould of Frederick the Great; while Buller has decidedly something of the Cromwell in him, being tall, big-boned, and ponderous, with a touch of ungainliness even in his figure; severe, almost sullen, in his aspect; curt of speech and abrupt in manner; taking no pains to glove his iron hand in velvet; sharp and straightforward, averse to all show and self-advertisement, an intense hater of shams and humbug; a man calculated to inspire fear and respect more than affection in his subordinates, but withal a man of great honesty of purpose and force of character:

to be trusted implicitly by his friends, and dreaded by his foes. Wolseley is more the French type of soldier, dashing yet thorough, albeit fond of form and appearance, and even an occasional glance at the gallery; while Buller reminds one of the solid, stolid, heavy-handed, heavy-treading German: serious, single-minded, and calmly masterful in all his ways.

Such, then, was the man whom Wolseley, in many respects his antithesis, happily discovered during his Red River expedition, and appointed to be his chief intelligence officer during the subsequent campaign in Ashanti. Here Buller was at once the eyes and ears, the pioneer, so to speak, of the force which penetrated from Cape Coast Castle, through a horrible region of pestilence and countless other perils, to the skull-studded capital of King Koffee Kalkali; and though a bullet once smashed the compass at his side, and he was slightly wounded at the battle of Ordahsu, as well as stricken down with fever, his courage and will-power carried him on to take part in the five days' fierce bush-fighting which preceded the fall of Coomassie—when he returned home with

the rank of Major, as well as with the high compliments which had been paid him in the despatches of his grateful chief.

His next service in the field was of a very different kind, for your true soldier can turn his hand to any kind of fighting. South Africa now became the scene of chronic trouble with the native races, and in the campaign against the Gaikas and Galekas, as well as in the subsequent smashing up of the Zulu power, Major Buller simply covered himself with glory as the organiser and leader of the Frontier Light Horse. In the former campaign, as his General said of him, 'he set an example of intrepidity and calm courage to his men under very trying circumstances;' while the military historian of the ten months' war wrote: 'Buller was a splendid worker, never seeming to tire, however great the amount of hard work; and wherever the stiffest amount of work was, he was sure to be found. In action, if you could ascertain for certain where most bullets were flying, you could be pretty safe in venturing your last dollar that Buller would be in the midst of it.'

As leader of the Frontier Light Horse, Buller, who had been bred to the profession of arms as an infantryman, developed a kind of Cromwellian genius for the mounted arm, and for the commanding of men. 'Leading his men at a swinging canter,' wrote one historian of the campaign, 'with his reins in his teeth, a revolver in one hand and a knob-kerrie which he had snatched from a Zulu in the other, his hat blown off in the *mêlée*, and a large streak of blood across his face, caused by a splinter of rock from above, this gallant horseman seemed a demon incarnate to the flying savages who slunk out of his path as if he had been, as they believed him to be, an evil spirit whose very look was death.'

It was no wonder that his men loved their fierce, silent captain, though he ruled them with an iron rod. In one hand he held an iron rod to enforce the discipline of his men, and in another a shield wherewith to screen them from death. Thus at the action of the Inhlobane Mountain he was instrumental in saving the lives of two of his officers and one of his men, at the imminent peril of his own. Buller had brilliantly

performed the task appointed him by his chief, Evelyn Wood, which was to reconnoitre the mountain, when his force was compelled to retreat, in something like panic-stricken disorder, before the sudden appearance of overwhelming masses of the savage enemy. Buller himself was almost the only man whose cool courage did not desert him on his way down the boulder-strewn and débris-encumbered hillside. Presently he came upon Captain D'Arcy, whose horse had been shot under him, and who was retiring on foot. Buller, though a heavy enough burden in himself for his own exhausted horse, took the captain up behind him and carried him out of reach of the hotly pursuing foe. A little later, in exactly the same manner, he rescued Lieutenant Everett; and later still he pulled up behind him a trooper whose horse could go no farther, with the enemy not eighty yards behind. Finally he led into camp seven other troopers who, flying from the mountain, had lost their way.

For these splendid services Buller was awarded the Victoria Cross, a proud distinction which carries with it all the greater honour when it is conferred for the saving,

as distinguished from the destruction of life. The personal saviour of individual men's lives, Buller may also be said to have proved the salvation of Lord Chelmsford's little army; for he it was whose bold and intelligent scouting led to the selection of the position at Ulundi, where the savage Zulu power of Cetawayo received its crushing blow. Had the personal inclination of Buller been followed when he returned to South Africa to join his old chief, Sir Evelyn Wood, after the disaster of Majuba Hill, the shame of that disaster would have been very quickly effaced.

Well may Sir Garnet Wolseley have written to Evelyn Wood at the close of the Zulu campaign: 'You and Buller have been the bright spots in this miserable war, and all through I have felt proud that I numbered you both among my friends and companions in arms.' As Buller had pioneered Sir Garnet's punitive expedition through the pathless swamps and forests of Ashanti, so again, as chief of Wolseley's Intelligence Department, it was he who piloted his little army, Graham's brigade in particular, across the starlit desert from

Kassassin to Tel-el-Kebir, where Arabi Pasha was crushed as effectually as Koffee Kalkali and Cetewayo had been successively crushed before him.

In the Egyptian campaign of 1882, Buller, who now became Sir Redvers, had been, so to speak, the brain of Wolseley's little army, but now he was to receive a command which called for the exercise of brawn no less than brain. Appointed to the command of the first brigade in, as well as second in command of, the little force—4,000 men—with which General Graham, in 1884, was despatched to Suakim to avenge the frequent massacres of Egyptian troops at the hands of Osman Digna, Sir Redvers Buller contributed materially, by his never-failing coolness and courage, to the victory of El-Teb; while at the subsequent battle of Tamai it was he who positively saved the day. At El-Teb Graham had advanced his force in one huge hollow square; but at Tamai, not wishing again to incur the risk of placing all his eggs in one basket, he divided it into squares of brigades, and thus moved out of camp against the Dervish enemy.

So terrific and irresistible was the devilish

onrush of the Hadendowas that Davis's brigade was dented in and pressed back in confusion, when the day seemed lost. But as Buller in Zululand had repeatedly plucked his comrades from the jaws of death, so he now also pulled the little army of Graham from the jaws of disaster. Buller's square, composed of the 'gay Gordons,' the Royal Irish, and the 60th Rifles, among the ranks of whom he had first won his spurs, had been assailed in the same furious manner as that of Davis, but had blown away all opposition to its advance, about five hundred yards on the right rear of its fellow brigade, to whose support it now moved up, calmly and machine-like as if on parade. Encouraged by the splendid steadiness of Buller's embattled men, Davis's disrupted square was quick to rally; and then the two brigades combined to rain such an infernal fire of bullets on their savage foes, that the latter were forced to break and the day was won.

The Duke of Wellington used to say that, even if he got into a tight place, he could always rely upon his troops, whom he otherwise rewarded by abusing as 'the scum of the earth,' to pull him out of it again. But

it has ever been exactly all the other way about with Redvers Buller. To him has always fallen the extricating *rôle*, the part of *Deus ex machinâ*, the duty of unravelling hopeless tangles, of setting right things which had gone desperately wrong, and of saving the day. In this respect his next campaign was destined to make him shine forth in a more brilliant light than ever.

This was the Nile campaign of 1885, in which he served as Chief of the Staff to his ever-trustful and appreciative chief, Lord Wolseley. Stewart's column had made its blood-stained march across the Bayuda desert from Korti to Metemneh only to encounter what may be called victorious disaster, to find that Khartoum had fallen, and to be threatened with annihilation on its return. It had lost its original leader, but it was soon to be furnished with another. With only a few companies of the Royal Irish, the same gallant regiment as had helped him to save the day at Tamai, Buller hurried across the desert to Gubat, took command of the threatened force, and in the most masterly manner led it back in safety to Korti—sick and wounded included

—fending off the attacks and baffling the hostile designs of the vengeful Dervishes.

Not more skilfully did Xenophon conduct the retreat of his immortal ten thousand from the Euphrates to the sea than Redvers Buller led back the remnants of Stewart's column from Gubat to the Nile. A retreat, when prompted by motives of strategical prudence instead of panic fear, is one of the most difficult, dangerous, and most honourable operations in war, and can only be undertaken by a master of his art. Once when some one, in the hearing of Moltke, was comparing him to Alexander and Cæsar, Marlborough and Napoleon, 'No,' said the great strategist deprecatingly, 'I have no right to rank with any of these great commanders, for I have never in all my life commanded a retreat'—a confession of inferiority which was also in the nature of a subtle self-compliment.

Since the Nile campaign of unhappy memory, Sir Redvers Buller has seen no service in the field—unless perhaps to this category of duty we assign his appointment, in 1886, as Special Commissioner to deal with the Fenians, moonlighters, and other

outrage-mongers in Cork and Kerry, which was followed by his temporary nomination as Under-Secretary for Ireland. But a soldier of the brainy type of Buller can prove just as useful to his country in the bureau as on the battlefield; and of office and administrative work in the course of his career he has had experience both ample and varied. Both in Scotland and at Aldershot, in the intervals of his campaigns, he did Quartermaster duty, and after the Nile expedition he became the head of this department in Pall Mall, where he left his mark, as everywhere else, by re-organising the commissariat and transport of the army; while, when he succeeded Lord Wolseley as Adjutant-General, on the latter's promotion to the post of Commander-in-Chief, he devoted himself to the writing of the *Infantry Drill Book*, which has the reputation of being the very best thing of the kind that was ever penned.

It is said that when the Duke of Cambridge retired from the Horse Guards in 1895, it was the intention of Sir Campbell-Bannerman to appoint General Buller in his stead, and that it was only the sudden collapse of the Liberal cabinet that obviated

'an act which, despite Buller's merits, would have been a grave injustice to Lord Wolseley.' Be that as it may, it seemed fortunate that Buller, instead of replacing the Duke of Cambridge at the Horse Guards, was reserved to succeed the Duke of Connaught at Aldershot, seeing that it is against military custom and etiquette for our Commander-in-Chief himself to take the command of an army in the field ; and it would have been thought a positive misfortune for the nation had General Buller not been free to direct the operations of our forces in South Africa : a man still in the prime of vigour despite his sixty years, of tried valour and experience, and with a service-record in brilliancy second to none of the famous paladins of the Empress-Queen.

All the greater, therefore, was public surprise when the early course of the war resulted in a 'serious reverse' for Buller (to quote his own words) on the Tugela at Colenso, following hard on the equally grave defeats of Lord Methuen at Magersfontein and of General Gatacre at the Stormberg ; and painful was the impression, while carrying with it a sense of relief, produced by the

ensuing appointment of Lord Roberts to the chief command in South Africa so as to enable Sir Redvers to devote his undivided attention to the difficult operations in Natal—for that was how the change of supreme command was 'motivated' and expressed.

The truth is that with all their training none of our Generals had ever had any experience of the kind of warfare which they were now called upon to wage with a marksman nation of mounted infantry like the Boers armed, as it turned out to the astonishment of us all, with artillery superior in weight and range to our own, and possessed of a mobility in the field which practically gave them the fighting advantage of twice their actual numbers.

The consequence was that repeated blunders and errors of judgment, due to our unfamiliarity with this new method of warfare, marked the earlier stages of the campaign, tending even to shake public confidence in Generals who, taught by bitter and bloody experience, may nevertheless emerge from the war with as bright a reputation as Frederick the Great after retrieving his most crushing disaster at Kolin by his most

dazzling victories at Rossbach and Leuthen; or as did the Federal leaders in the American Civil War, whose initial failures in the field formed the solid basis of their subsequent fame.

CHAPTER III

FIELD-MARSHAL LORD ROBERTS OF KANDAHAR, V.C., G.C.B., G.C.S.I., &c.

OF all the brilliant soldiers who have helped to found and consolidate our Empire in the East—that Empire which dwarfs the conquests of Alexander and of Cæsar—none have acquired a higher niche in the temple of military fame than the illustrious warrior known to the British peerage as Lord Roberts of Kandahar, and to the British private as 'Little Bobs.' Of Irish extraction, with a dash of French Huguenot blood in his veins, Frederick Sleigh Roberts was born in 1836 at Cawnpore, which he was afterwards to enter as one of the heroes of an avenging host. His father, Sir Abraham Roberts, had attained the age of ninety and become the 'Patriarch of Indian Generals.'

After spending his boyhood, like all

Photo: London Stereoscopic Co.

FIELD-MARSHAL LORD ROBERTS.

Indian-born British children, in England—at Clifton, Eton, Sandhurst, and Addiscombe ('John Company's' military seminary)—young Roberts came out ninth in a batch of fifty cadets, and was at once posted to a lieutenancy in the Bengal Artillery. At Addiscombe he had suffered so much from heart complaint that reviving sherry had to be kept at his bedside. But if his heart was functionally weak, it was full of the finest courage, though it very nearly sank on his way through the Red Sea out to India. 'I don't know,' he said, 'how we shall ever be able to fight in India if it is as hot as this.' But what was the heat of the Red Sea to the torrid sun-flames, intensified by the Sepoy shell-fire of Delhi, which were now beginning to flare up? In May 1857, news of the mutiny at Meerut and the seizure of Delhi reached Peshawur, where Lieutenant Roberts was acting as D.A.Q.G. of the division commanded by Major-General Reed; and presently before Delhi, the headquarters of the rebellion, there appeared the immortal 'field force' into which Roberts, after urgent entreaty, had been able to exchange from the Punjab movable column.

It was now that his career of glory began —a career that was repeatedly all but cut short by the bullets, shells, and sabres of the Sepoys. Wherever blows were rife, Lieutenant Roberts was sure to be found rejoicing in the rapture of the fray. He was close to Neville Chamberlain when the latter's arm was shattered by grape shot; while 'a bullet lodged in the capouch of Roberts, making a severe bruise close to the spine, and had it not been for the capouch he must have been killed.' But wounds he soon recovered from, and cholera he defied. When the siege train at last came up, Roberts got himself attached to one of the batteries, and was indefatigable in directing its fire. He had several hair-breadth escapes; but, like Cutts, the 'Salamander' at the siege of Namur, he seemed to bear a charmed life. When the assault was delivered, Roberts had his horse shot. During the final operations he had been employed more as an 'eye' than as an 'arm' of the besieging force—in reconnoitring the streets and defences of Delhi; and the quality of his services in this respect may be judged from the fact that the information he placed at the disposal of his

chief enabled the latter to take a bastion in reverse, as well as to capture a position in the centre of the city without the loss of a single man.

From the siege of Delhi young Roberts, still acting as staff officer, passed with Greathead's movable column to his own birthplace —blood-stained Cawnpore — distinguishing himself repeatedly on the march. In the action of Bolundshur he attached himself, though a gunner, to the 9th Lancers, and while passing through a gateway a Sepoy took deliberate aim at him and fired, though the bullet only killed his charger. On another occasion the troops he accompanied performed 'the almost unparalleled achievement of fighting an action and marching sixty-six miles in forty hours, nine miles of which the cavalry did at a trot through high crops or over ploughed fields'—a fine piece of training this for the man who was afterwards to cut this record with his march from Kabul to Kandahar.

Receiving at Cawnpore an accession of strength from the 93rd Highlanders, the avenging column started for the relief of Lucknow, on which Sir Colin Campbell and

his Highlanders were now also converging from Calcutta. The march was terribly toilsome and perilous. 'I was sent,' wrote Lieutenant Roberts, 'by Sir Hope Grant to select the ground for a new camp. . . . While we were waiting and talking to what appeared to be pilgrims, we were shot at, and on looking round saw a considerable number of the enemy between us and our force. . . . We put spurs to our horses, but had a narrow escape. My horse, while crossing a river, was slightly wounded and fell, and in doing so my sword fell from my hand and cut my left thumb badly.' As Quartermaster-General of Hope Grant's column, Roberts reconnoitred the road, and had the honour of leading the army in the advance from the Alumbagh to Dilkoosha which initiated the operations resulting in the relief of the beleaguered garrison. But it was at the Mess House that Roberts surpassed all his previous feats of cool bravery, and his own very modest and self-effacing account of the incident is this: 'I took the flag of the 2nd Punjab Infantry, by Sir Colin Campbell's orders, and placed it on the Mess House, to show Outram and Havelock where we were.

The enemy knocked the flagstaff down three times, breaking the pole once.' But it was just as often put up again by the dauntless Roberts, who stuck to his object amid a hail of bullets.

On another occasion, at Lucknow, 'while following up the retreating enemy, with the ardour of a fox-hunter, Roberts saw two Sepoys making off with a standard. Putting spurs to his horse, he overtook them just as they were about to enter a village, and made for them sword in hand. They immediately turned at bay, and presented their muskets at him. It was a critical moment as one of them pulled the trigger, but the cap snapped almost in Roberts's face, and the next moment he had laid the Sepoy carrying the standard dead at his feet, with a tremendous cut across the head, seizing the trophy as it fell from his lifeless grasp. Meanwhile his companion made off to the village.' But a finer exploit of the same kind ensued. 'Following the rebels Roberts came up with a group consisting of a Sikh Sowar and a rebel Sepoy, standing at bay, with musket and bayonet. Roberts, not counting the odds, rode straight at the Sepoy, and

with one fierce slash across the face killed him on the spot.' These two acts of personal prowess gained for him the much-coveted Victoria Cross—a fact the record of which Lord Roberts himself modestly relegates to the obscure position of a footnote in his charming reminiscences of *Forty-one Years in India.*

'Roberts,' wrote Admiral Oliver Jones, 'is as good as he is brave. He is one of those rare men who, to uncommon bravery and daring in the field, and unflinching discharge of duty in the camp, add the charm of cheery and unaffected kindness and hospitality in the tent, and his acquaintance and friendship are high prizes to those who obtain them.' He was ever to the front, as usual, in all the operations against and around Lucknow; and when at last the fortress was relieved, and the backbone of the rebellion broken, his health, never robust, gave way from the lack of stirring action to sustain it, and he was invalided home, handing over his duties to Garnet Wolseley, his compeer in fame.

After a year's rest in England, Roberts returned to India, and was recommended by

Lord Clyde to the Viceroy, Lord Canning, to take charge of his camp. Those camp-marshal duties Roberts had to interrupt in 1863, when he was told off to take part in the Umbeyla campaign in the Far North-West, where he had gained his first experience of Indian warfare.

Restored to administrative work in the Q.M.G.'s department, he next compiled a masterly *Route Book* for the Bengal Presidency; for the peace duties of a staff officer are quite as important as his functions in war. It was a cruel dispensation which condemned a 'fighting devil' like Roberts to the drudgery of a bureau, but he was a singular compound of a Moltke and a Blücher, and could adapt himself to desk work or to field work as occasion demanded.

For the latter an opportunity again occurred when General Napier, as Dizzy finely phrased it, was sent 'with the artillery of Europe, borne by the elephants of Asia, across the mountains of Rasselas in Abyssinia,' to show King Theodore that there was no place in all the wide world to which the punitive arm of England could not reach. Donald Stewart, afterwards his fellow cham-

pion in Afghanistan, who commanded a brigade of this expeditionary army, wanted a Q.M.G., and who could better fill this post than Major Roberts? His services at the landing-place on the Red Sea were too urgently required to permit of his going inland. But whether at the front or the rear, Roberts never failed to bear away the bell for energy and successful activity, and at the close of the campaign he was sent to London with the despatches which contained a cordial eulogy of his own merits.

It had fretted the heart of the ardent Roberts that he had not been able to go to the front in Abyssinia, and share in any fighting that befel; but now he had not long to wait for one of those 'little wars' which are to Indian soldiers what the grand autumn manœuvres are to continental armies. Having organised, he was appointed senior staff officer of, the expedition which, about the time that France and Germany were stripping for a fall, was sent to chastise and subjugate the turbulent Looshai tribes on the south-eastern confines of our Indian empire towards Burmah. But staff service, pure and simple, would not content him, and we find him

'leading the advance against a stockade' in a very difficult and dangerous country. The taking of Taikoom, which ended the campaign, was mainly due to the fact that the attacking column was led in person by Roberts—the first time he had commanded in action. 'Lieut.-Colonel Roberts's untiring energy and sagacity,' wrote the commanding general, 'are beyond all praise. He works without guides, even without map or geography, and thwarted the Looshais, whose game was to delay our progress. He never seemed at a loss.'

A year or two later Roberts was made Q.M.G. in India, and on his shoulders rested most of the responsibility for the preparation of the camps and durbars necessitated as well by the Prince of Wales's visit to India (1875–1876) as by the proclamation of the Queen as Kaiser-i-Hind. Nor was he less useful and energetic in the field of fighting than in the field of famine (1873–1874), where this was how he appeared to Archibald Forbes, the brilliant war-correspondent:—"Short and slight, square, however, of shoulder, and of a distinctly military carriage, his whole aspect denoting alertness and a

wiry endurance. He had the air of quiet command one sometimes discerns in men who have seen much service, when as yet they have not attained high leadership. His face was almost ascetic in its attenuation; hollow temples indented and narrow, the lofty forehead that rose above the keen quick eyes; the lower section of the face was long, gaunt, and sallow, ending in a chin, every line and contour of which betokened force and resolution.'

Combining the experience of a soldier with the sagacity of a statesman, Roberts made a deep impression on the Viceroy, Lord Lytton, who gave him an appointment which was virtually that of Warden of the Marches on the North-West Frontier; and when it became necessary to force the Ameer of Afghanistan, Shere Ali, to receive a British mission at Kabul, Major-General Roberts got the command of the centre, or Kuram Valley, column (about 5,500 men) of the force which was to advance on the defiant despot's capital by three several routes. Crossing the frontier (November 1878) Roberts hastened forward, only to find his path barred by a superior force of Afghans

on the Peiwar Kotal. Making a circuitous night march, and developing his attack at dawn, he launched the 72nd Highlanders (Ross-shire Buffs) and the little Ghoorkas on the first stockade of the Afghans, which was carried without a pause, save to bayonet the defenders, and stockade after stockade was thus stormed in rapid succession. After several hours' fighting the Peiwar Kotal was finally carried, with a British loss of twenty-one killed and seventy-two wounded. As far as Roberts was concerned, the fighting was now over, and the spring brought to the British camp Yakoub Khan, who had meanwhile succeeded to his father, Shere Ali, and who hastened to sign the Treaty of Gandamak, which virtually deprived Afghanistan of its previous character as a 'buffer State,' and made it a feudatory of the British crown. At a banquet given in his honour on his return to India, Roberts—now a K.C.B.—was referred to by the Viceroy as 'the hero of the Afghan war.'

But a greater war of the kind was still to come. For scarcely had the ink on the Treaty of Gandamak become dry when that instrument was 'torn into bloody shreds' by

the murder of Sir Louis Cavagnari and all the members of his mission at Kabul. Whatever the rights and wrongs of our Afghan policy, the massacre of our mission called loudly for retribution, and the work of avenging so foul and treacherous an outrage was entrusted to Sir Frederick Roberts, whose appointment to the task was again hailed with general acclamation—especially by the private soldiers, whose personal devotion to 'Little Bobs' was so intense that they would have cheerfully followed him to the infernal regions.

Roberts's objective was again Kabul, which he soon reached with his small army, after clearing the way by fighting a victorious action at Charasiah. In front of Kabul he spent some considerable time with varying military fortune, being meanwhile joined by Sir Donald Stewart from Kandahar, and the army was actually on the eve of returning to India when news came to Kabul by wire, *viâ* Simla, of the British disaster at Maiwand—a reverse more severe than any that had befallen the British army since Chillianwallah. In the face of this disaster Roberts was entrusted with the task of

relieving Kandahar, back to which from Maiwand the broken regiments had streamed.

The marching-out strength of his relieving force, including a splendid Highland brigade of the 'Gay Gordons' and the Ross-shire Buffs, was about 10,000—just the number whom Xenophon led back from the plains of Cunaxa to the banks of the Euxine. On August 9, 1879, the immortal column began its march of 313 miles, and it had covered the distance in twenty days, including one of rest, which gave an average of over fifteen miles per day. On September 1—the anniversary of Sedan—Roberts gave battle to and utterly defeated Ayoub. After a brief rest he rode to the various regiments in succession, beginning with the Gordons, whose list of casualties was the longest, to thank them for the successes they had achieved for him; and he was everywhere received with deafening cheers—cheers which were repeated, so to speak, when, after the war was over, Roberts came to England and received the thanks of both Houses of Parliament, the freedom of the City, and other honours innumerable.

When, a few years later, Mandalay was

captured and King Thebaw deposed from the throne of Burmah, Roberts took command, and soon, as usual, brought the operations to a successful issue. Again, when the cry went up to wipe out the reverse of Majuba, Roberts was selected as the avenging angel, and lucky it was for the Boers that peace had been concluded before the conqueror of Kandahar had time to reach their plains.

In 1885 Lord Roberts exchanged the command of the Madras army for the post of Commander-in-Chief in India; and no sooner had he thus succeeded to his old Abyssinian and Afghan comrade in arms than he addressed himself with all the indomitable energy of his nature to the work of army reform, as well as of perfecting the defences of the Empire—especially on the North-West frontier, establishing a series of fortified positions which, if not impregnable, at least rendered an invasion from the North (Russia) hopelessly arduous. In his dealings with the British and native armies he touched only to improve. Like Lord Napier of Magdala, too, Roberts has been *par excellence* the soldier's friend, so that Tommy Atkins has

conceived an almost idolatrous affection for the Chief referred to in every barrack-room as 'Bobs, God bless him!' Never was the departure of an Indian official more mourned and regretted, as well by the English as the native population. As representing the latter at a valedictory banquet, the Maharajah, Sir Pertab Singh, said he 'but echoes the wish of all the princes and people in India, that they may soon see Lord Roberts return as Viceroy.' 'No Commander-in-Chief in any country,' said the Maharajah of Kapurthala at a banquet (with sword of honour) given by the City of London, 'has ever attained the popularity which Lord Roberts possesses among the people of all classes;' and that this popularity was not confined to India was proved by the fact that the most conspicuous and loudly cheered subject in the Diamond Jubilee procession of the Queen was 'Little Bobs' on the snow-white palfrey which had carried him on his ever memorable march from Kabul to Kandahar.

'Utterly exhausted as I was,' he afterwards wrote, in referring to his victory at Kandahar, 'from the hard day's work and the weakening effects of my late illness, the

cheers by which I was greeted by the troops as I rode into Ayoub Khan's camp nearly unmanned me, and it was with a very big lump in my throat that I managed to say a few words of thanks to each corps in return. When I returned to Kandahar, and threw myself on the bed in the little room prepared for me, I was dead beat and quite unequal to the effort of reporting our success to the Queen or to the Viceroy. After an hour's rest, however, and knowing how anxiously news from Kandahar was looked for, both in England and India, I managed to pull myself together sufficiently to write out and despatch a telegram.'

But it did not take Lord Roberts even so long as this to pull himself together from the still more prostrating shock of the terrible grief which must have overwhelmed him on learning that his only son had fallen a victim to our blundering on the Tugela, though not before distinguishing himself to a degree that would probably have brought him, had he lived, the Victoria Cross—pull himself together at his country's call for the purpose of recovering at Pretoria the guns which had been abandoned at Colenso, just

as at Kandahar he had recaptured the cannon we had lost at Maiwand. With a sigh of relief the nation learned, after Buller's 'serious reverse' at Colenso, that the Conqueror of Kandahar with Lord Kitchener, the conqueror of Khartoum, as his Chief of the Staff, had been appointed to the supreme control of our campaign in South Africa. Commander-in-Chief in India before he accepted the same position in his own native Ireland, Lord Roberts now went out to South Africa as the Generalissimo of all our forces there, forming the biggest British army that ever took the field, and his countrymen had the profoundest confidence that he would prove the Scipio Africanus of our time.

CHAPTER IV

GENERAL SIR HENRY EVELYN WOOD V.C., G.C.B., G.G.M.G.

(Adjutant-General to the Forces)

IN all the British army, which contains a good many very accomplished officers, there is probably no more 'all round' man than the present Adjutant-General to the Forces. For in his time, as one of his biographers remarks, he has successively been 'sailor, cornet and lieutenant of horse, captain and major of infantry, graduate of the Staff College, barrister-at-law, colonial administrator, brilliant general, distinguished author, bold rider to hounds, Master of the Fishmongers' Company, skilful organiser, humorist, thrice recommended for the Victoria Cross, ardent bicyclist, and good fellow all round.'

By birth he is an 'Essex calf,' but never before was there a calf with such a lion's

Photo: Elliott & Fry, London.

GENERAL SIR EVELYN WOOD.

heart beneath its hide. His grandfather was an opulent merchant of London town, Sir Matthew Wood, who had been thrice its Lord Mayor, and for more than thirty years its representative in Parliament, where he made himself notorious by his ostentatious championship of the cause of Queen Caroline, the faithless German spouse of the equally faithless German George IV. His father was the Rev. Sir John Page Wood, Bart., vicar of Cressing in Essex, where he was born in 1838, and his uncle was Lord Hatherley, Lord Chancellor of England. On the other hand, his Cornish mother, Michell by name, belonged to a naval family; and it was perhaps due to this fact that young Evelyn Wood first sought distinction on the sea—to this fact and the additional one that the rough unruly sea seemed to be the most fitting life-element for such a pranky and audacious spirit.

As a middy on board the wooden-walled *Queen*, 116 guns, young Wood, after attaining his fourteenth year, spent 'eighteen exciting and happy months,' being present at the inglorious bombardment of Odessa; but he was lucky enough to be included in the

immortal Naval Brigade which landed to join our forces at the siege of Sebastopol, and the boy had not been long in the trenches before he was twice recommended for the Victoria Cross. On one occasion, as was written by Captain Peel, to whom he was acting as A.D.C., Wood, as yet only in his sixteenth year—listen, ye boys of England!—'volunteered to bring up powder from the rear through a fire which daunted others. It was the more noble as there were no spectators. The names of those two heroes (Daniells was the other) are known through the whole army; and I almost thought it inconvenient to have two such dauntless spirits around me.'

The very next day Captain Peel thanked his boyish aide-de-camp in the presence of the guns' crews under his command for having mounted and extinguished, under a very heavy fire from the Malakoff and the Redan, a magazine which had been set on fire by the Russian shells. 'You will be glad to hear,' wrote Captain Peel to Wood's father, 'that not only did your son show the most beautiful courage in battery, but his conduct and manners are as exemplary as his courage.' 'In the final assault on the Redan,

Wood, running like a deer, or a cricketer on the fields of Eton, was the only member of the Naval Brigade to reach the wall, where he was struck down senseless by a Russian bullet. 'All behaved well,' said Lord Lyons, the naval chief, at a banquet given him afterwards by the City of London, 'but I doubt if in the whole history of chivalry there is anything finer than the conduct of Captain Peel and his two gallant aides-de-camp, one of whom (Wood) was wounded, placing the scaling ladders against the walls of the Redan.'

Justly disgusted at not receiving the 'penn'orth o' bronze,' which he had repeatedly earned, and for which he had been twice recommended, Midshipman Wood, on being invalided home, in his eighteenth year, now determined to woo the coy goddess Bellona on another tack, and procured a commission in the 13th Light Dragoons (now Hussars). 'On the eleventh day (!) after joining,' wrote Sir Evelyn in a charmingly chatty Jubilee article on 'The Soldiers of the Queen,' 'I wrote direct to the Commander-in-Chief urging that I had not joined the army to spend my time in a quiet

country town; and, alleging that I had passed all my drills, begged I might be allowed to join the headquarters of the regiment in the Crimea. This letter was duly acknowledged by the Adjutant-General to the Forces in the following terms: "The officer commanding the depôt is directed to point out to this officer that correspondence should be forwarded through the proper channel. The Commander-in-Chief has always understood it takes more than eleven days to make a perfect cavalry officer, which time it appears the applicant has been at the depôt." The letter, however, wound up by saying that, as the young officer was so anxious to return to the Crimea, he should be sent out at the first opportunity.'

But in the meantime Sebastopol fell, the Mutiny broke out, and young Wood, exchanging into the 17th Lancers, known as the 'Death or Glory Boys,' went out to India, where he learned the language almost as quickly as he had learned his cavalry drill, and joined the 3rd Bombay Cavalry, at the head of whom he soon won the Victoria Cross (which had been so niggardly refused him as a 'middy' in the Crimea), 'for having

—during the action at Sindwaho, when in command of a troop of the 3rd Light Cavalry —attacked with much gallantry, almost single-handed, a body of rebels, who had made a stand, whom he routed; also for having subsequently, near Sindhora, gallantly advanced with a Duffadar and Sowar of Beatson's Horse, and rescued from a band of robbers a Potail, whom they had captured and carried off to the jungle, where they intended to hang him.' 'I assure you,' wrote Sir Richmond Shakespeare, 'that I believe the services of those two officers, Lieutenants Bradford [afterwards Chief Commissioner of Police for the Metropolis] and Wood, will be of more avail in restoring order than any number of English soldiers.'

But as Wood, in somewhat of a huff, had quitted the navy to become a 'horse marine, so he now in turn, from motives of a somewhat similar kind, forsook the cavalry arm in order to try his fortune with the infantry. He had been censured by his cavalry chief for an act of too literal obedience to orders—some even called it insubordination—and he resigned, although Major Mayne (of Mayne's Horse) wrote of him: 'I have never met with an

officer of Lieutenant Wood's age (not yet twenty-three) who gave higher promise of making a brilliant soldier. His whole heart and soul are in his work; and he is an impersonation of Sir Charles Napier's *beau idéal* of an irregular horseman.'

But he had meanwhile had enough of horsemanship, as well as of the burning heat of India, so that soon after returning home he exchanged his sabre for a claymore. That is to say, a major by purchase at the age of twenty-four, he exchanged into the 73rd Highlanders, now the 2nd battalion Black Watch, with whom he remained for three years, when he 'took a turn'—like Dugald Dalgetty—with the Leicestershire Regiment; and, not content with that, he finally passed to the 90th 'Perthshire Greybreeks' (now the 2nd Scottish Rifles), a battalion which had ever exercised a curious fascination for the coming men of the army, seeing that it had already been the nursery of two Commanders-in-Chief—one that had been—Viscount Hill, and one that was to be—Viscount Wolseley.

In the intervals between his regimental service, Wood had spent several years at the Staff College, he had read for and been

called to the Bar, he had done various kinds of Staff service—in Ireland, among other places, during the Fenian troubles of '66, where, in looking for military glory, he found what was much more substantial—a model wife. It was during the Salisbury Plain manœuvres of 1872 that he was first brought into service contact with Sir Garnet Wolseley, who was quick to recognise his capacity for organisation and command; and so, when the Ashanti campaign became necessary next year, he appointed Lieutenant-Colonel Wood to do what he had done so well fifteen years previously in India—that is to say, raise a body of natives as allies to the British, a body which he soon disciplined in such a manner that Wolseley wrote to him: 'I watched you through a glass until you got close to the marines we left on the beach, and your movements looked so pretty that one would have thought them a strategic movement across the "Long Valley."'

Wood, with his Fanti levies, was fortunate enough to fight the first action of the campaign, 'thus breaking the spell,' as Wolseley said, 'of the invincibility of the Ashantis in the bush.' In the subsequent fighting he

was badly wounded in the breast by an Ashanti slug, but neither wounds nor fever could keep him back, and struggling on again to the front at the head of his swarthy levies he led the attack at Ordahsu which opened the road to Coomassie. On him (and on Baker Russell) 'the brunt of this war has fallen,' wrote Wolseley at its close, with other high encomia on his fellow major in the 'Perthshire Greybreeks.'

Colonel Wood's next field of service was to be South Africa, whither, after acting for several years as second staff officer at Aldershot, he was sent out in the spring of 1878 to take command of one of the four columns detailed to crush the power of the Zulus, headed by their chief, Cetewayo, to whom he once referred as 'that African tyrant with the voice of the lamb and the teeth of the wolf.' 'March separately, strike combined'—such was ever the strategical maxim of Moltke, as it was also that of Lord Chelmsford, who divided his force into four weak columns for the invasion of Zululand, with Ulundi, Cetewayo's capital-kraal, as their concentrating and crushing point. Colonel Wood was given the fourth column on the left, with his base

at Utrecht, in the south-east corner of the Transvaal, which had, the year before, been formally annexed to England.

That was why Wood's column came to include a body of mounted Boers under the brave Piet Uys, who did excellent service for the common cause—the protection of the white population from Zulu barbarities. Wood advanced with circumspect boldness, but ere long there reached him the news of what was practically the annihilation of the column next to his at Isandlwana; and that gave him pause, just as the defeat of Blücher at Ligny imposed a policy of reserve on the victorious Wellington at Quatre Bras. In the same manner, Wood's being now a waiting game, he took up a strongly entrenched position on Kamboula Hill, while sending out from time to time the irregular horsemen of Piet Uys and Redvers Buller to reconnoitre the foe and provoke them to an attack.

At last this policy had its effect, and an immense host of undisciplined savages launched itself with dogged fury against Wood's handful of men, conspicuous among whom for their valour and discipline were his own 'Perthshire Greybreeks.' On both

sides the battle was desperate, but thanks to the cool intrepidity of Colonel Wood and the stubborn bravery of his men, it ended in the complete repulse of the savage enemy. 'And when on that glorious March 29,' said Wood himself afterwards at a City banquet, '24,000 Zulus measured their strength for five long hours—they seemed very long to me—against our 1,800 men, all, young and old, upheld equally the credit of our arms.'

It was not till four months later that the Zulus, after this smashing defeat, had the stomach to stand up for a final trial of strength with us at Ulundi, where the conquerors of Kamboula again played a prominent part. 'Steady, my lads,' Wood was heard to cry more than once; 'fire low and not so fast.' 'Evelyn Wood's face,' wrote Archibald Forbes, 'was radiant with the rapture of the fray, as he rode up and down behind his regiment exposed to a storm of bullets.' Wood's despatches are models of terse and clear battle-description. But, from the point of view of his biographer, they suffer from one extremely grave defect—they make no reference to himself. 'It is in Evelyn Wood's company,' wrote Forbes,

'that one hears least of Evelyn Wood.' Nevertheless, Wood was ever as a bright light shining in a dark place, so that Wolseley now wrote to him: 'Just a line to congratulate you on all you have done for the State. You and Buller have been the bright spots in this miserable war.' 'Two names stand out in bold relief,' similarly wrote Lord Chelmsford, 'the names of Wood and Buller.'

On his return home, Sir Evelyn—for he had now been knighted—received a splendid reception both in his native county and the City of London, which did its best to do honour to this ideal soldier. And as for his idealism, was not this finely expressed by what he said at a City banquet on the subject of regimental colours, which it was proposed to abolish, as indeed they are now no longer carried into action? 'It is suggested that they are cumbersome, and are the cause of sacrifices. After all, they are what?—a coloured rag on a stick; and is it worth while to risk men's lives for a piece of tawdry silk? You might as well say that because honour is invisible and faith impalpable, they do not exist as lode-stars

for the mind. Colours are potent to check disaster, to rally fugitives, to inspire attack; the chivalry that is shown in the defence of any high ideal, whatever may be its symbol, is surely never wasted. . .' And it was this sense of chivalry in another form which caused Sir Evelyn to return to South Africa as the guide, companion, and consoler of the Empress Eugénie when she went out there to visit the spot where her only son, the heir to an Imperial crown, had fallen beneath the assegais of the Zulus—a mission which caused it to be said by a Court official that, 'well as Evelyn Wood had done whatever he had put his hand to, he had never achieved a greater success.'

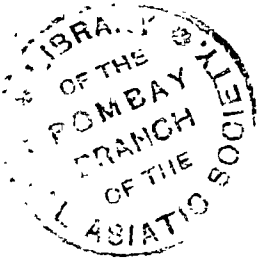
But if, in this personal errand to South Africa, Sir Evelyn failed not to achieve a brilliant success, his next mission to the same quarter must be described as of the nature of a successful failure. Colley had been beaten and killed by the insurgent Boers, and the conqueror of Kamboula Mount was doomed to become the martyr of Majuba Hill. Wood, who had again been sent out to Natal, was burning with the desire to wipe out the military shame of

Majuba, and declared to the home Government that he had the Boers 'in the palm of his hand.' But Mr. Gladstone's 'magnanimity,' for which we are now paying so dearly, overbore the military necessities of the case; and Sir Evelyn Wood, who was Civil Governor as well as Commander in Natal, exposed himself in the most chivalrous and self-sacrificing spirit to a world of obloquy and misunderstanding in the army by becoming the instrument of the policy of his political chief.

It was now in North Africa that Sir Evelyn sought for the military distinction which had been denied him in the south of the Dark Continent; but alas! in the campaign against Arabi he was condemned to command the troops at Alexandria instead of leading a brigade at Tel-el-Kebir. 'Desire Sir E. W.,' wired Wolseley to Hamley, 'to remain on the defensive and risk nothing'—a useful if inglorious *rôle*, which, after the campaign, he was asked to exchange for the post of 'Sirdar,' or Commander-in-Chief, of the native Egyptian army. As the holder of this office, he gradually reorganised and nursed that army to such a

state of perfection as at last enabled it to march *pari passu* with our own troops on the various stages of our reconquest of the Soudan. To Sir Evelyn, in 1884–85, was entrusted the safeguarding of our long line of communication from Alexandria to Metemneh, but this was his last service in the field.

Yet there are services in the bureau which surpass in public usefulness, if not in theatrical brilliancy, those of the battle-field; and in Pall Mall Sir Evelyn has plucked even brighter laurels as an administrator than those which, as a combatant, he culled in the Crimea and on Kamboula Mount. As Quartermaster-General, Commander at Aldershot, and Adjutant-General, he has done more than any other living man, according to Lord Wolseley, to 'modernise' the army.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CHAPTER V

LIEUTENANT-GENERAL SIR GEORGE WHITE, V.C., G.C.B., G.C.I.E., &c.

THE Commander of the Natal Field Force is a striking example of a man who literally carved out his way to fame and fortune with his claymore. Lord Beaconsfield has somewhere written that an opportunity occurs to every man, once at least in his lifetime, if only he be prepared to take advantage of it; and the truth of the saying received signal illustration in the career of Sir George Stewart White, the brilliant Scoto-Irishman who placed his foot on the lowest rung of the military ladder when, at the age of eighteen, he joined the Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers, among the ranks of whom he remained for many years unknown to fame; and then, passing to the Gordon Highlanders, carved out for himself a career of such brilliancy as

ultimately culminated in his appointment to succeed Lord Roberts as Commander-in-Chief in India. In the case of Sir George White, the opportunity referred to by 'Dizzy' came very late in life. 'Little Bobs' had won his Victoria Cross when still a young lieutenant, while his successor in office had reached his forty-fourth year, and the rank of major, before his career was marked by similar distinction.

The inactivity to which White, by the force of accident, was condemned for so many years must have been all the more galling to him as Nature has stamped him with the appearance of a true fighting man—a man made to grace the Highland garb and wield the broad claymore. It is a curious circumstance that our foremost Generals—Wolseley, Roberts, Wood—are men of no great stature and rather slight build, as some of the world's greatest commanders—Alexander, Cæsar, Frederick, Wellington, Napoleon—have also been. That is to say, some great commanders do not altogether look like fighting men. But General Stewart White, looking what he is and being what he looks, carries about him the genuine impress of a

Photo: Cowell, Simla.

LIEUT.-GENERAL SIR GEORGE WHITE.

soldier in his stalwart athletic mould, and the soldierly qualities of mind—courage, coolness, clearness of vision, quickness of decision and dash in action—as expressed in his manly handsome features. The same qualities are stamped on the head and features of 'Little Bobs,' if not perhaps suggested by his frame and stature.

The two men met in India as subalterns in 1857, only to part for more than twenty years, and then come together again in very remarkable circumstances. They only met to part—Roberts, the senior by five years, to get his immediate chance of glory in the midst of the Mutiny, and White to remain with his regiment on the North-West frontier guarding against danger from Afghanistan and the Punjaubis which never came. Well might White, in the bitterness of his heart at this deferring of hope, have hummed the refrain,

> O, it's you'll tak' the high road,
> And I'll tak' the low road,
> And I'll be in Scotland afore ye.'

If not in Scotland, at least in one of Scotland's foremost regiments, the 92nd Gordon Highlanders, into which White—who had

taken more than twenty years of peace to rise to the rank of major—exchanged just in time to march with them under Roberts to Kabul, in order to avenge the massacre of the Cavagnari mission. On pressed Roberts until he reached Charasiah ('Four Water Mills'), about twelve English miles from Kabul, where a formidable Afghan force, strongly posted in a hilly position, had massed to dispute his further passage, and a battle was the result, which was a brilliant victory for the British. Next day, Roberts, as he writes in his 'Forty-one Years in India,' met Major White, who 'explained to me his part in the victory of the previous day. From my inspection of the ground I had no difficulty in coming to the conclusion that much of the success which attended the operations on this side was due to White's military instincts, and, at one supreme moment, his extreme personal gallantry. It afforded me very great pleasure, therefore, to recommend this officer for the Victoria Cross, an honour of which more than one incident in his subsequent career proved him to be well worthy.'

What gained White this first recommenda-

tion for the V.C. was the incident which had better be detailed in the bald yet telling language of the official record: 'Finding that the artillery and rifle fire failed to dislodge the enemy from a fortified hill which it was necessary to capture, Major White led an attack upon it in person. Advancing with two companies of his regiment, and climbing from one steep ledge to another, he came upon a body of the enemy, strongly posted and outnumbering his force by about eight to one. His men being much exhausted, and immediate action being necessary, Major White took a rifle and, going on by himself, shot the leader of the enemy. This act so intimidated the rest that they fled round the side of the hill and the position was won'—the Highlanders crowning the hill with a ringing cheer for the bravery of their leader—a leader in the truest sense of the word; not one of those who cry 'Go on!' but 'Come on!'

Such stirring events were plentiful around Kabul during the chequered period of negotiating and fighting which now ensued there, recalling the personal combats that were waged under the walls of Troy. Take but one of

those encounters as related by 'Little Bobs himself: 'Large bodies of the enemy were moving up the slope of the ridge from the villages near Beni Hissar. To check this movement, and prevent the already very difficult Afghan position being further strengthened, Major White, who was in command of the leading portion of the attacking party, turned and made for the nearest point on the ridge. It was now a race between the Highlanders and the Afghans as to who should gain the crest of the ridge first. The Artillery came into action at a range of 1,200 yards, and under cover of the fire the 92nd, supported by the Guides, rushed up the steep slopes. They were met by a furious onslaught and a desperate encounter took place. The leading officer, Lieutenant Forbes, a lad of great promise, was killed, and Colour-Sergeant Drummond fell by his side. For a moment even the brave Highlanders were staggered by the numbers and fury of their antagonists, but only for a moment. Lieutenant Dick-Cunyngham (afterwards Colonel of the battalion) sprang forward to cheer them on, and confidence was restored. With a wild shout the High-

landers threw themselves on the Afghans, and quickly succeeded in driving them down the further side of the ridge.'

Again, at the crowning victory of Kandahar—to which White, with his Gordon Highlanders, had accompanied Roberts on his ever-memorable 313 miles in 20 days, including only one of complete rest—it was an heroic act of bravery on the part of the Scoto-Irish major—Scotch from his regiment as well as from family origin—which practically gave the decisive blow to the dogged resistance of Ayoub's army. Emulating the heroic example which had been set them by their countrymen of the 72nd, the 'Gay Gordons' had dashed themselves repeatedly against the foe, carrying villages and hill spurs and battery-defended positions at the point of the bayonet. But there was still one entrenched position which had defied all our efforts to capture, and which it was imperatively necessary to take. Battle-weary and blown, the Gordons were once more appealed to by their eager leader. 'Highlanders,' sang out Major White, 'will you take those guns if I give you the lead?' But let his chief describe the rest.

'It now became necessary,' wrote Lord Roberts, 'to take this position by storm, and recognising the fact with true soldierly instinct Major White, who was leading the advanced companies of the 92nd, called upon the men for just one charge more, "to close the business." The battery of screw guns had been shelling the position, and, under cover of its fire, and supported by a portion of the 2nd Gurkhas and 23rd Pioneers, the Highlanders, responding with alacrity to their leader's call, dashed forward and drove the enemy from their entrenchments at the point of the bayonet. Major White was the first to reach the guns, being closely followed by Sepoy Inderbir Lama, who, placing his rifle on one of them, exclaimed, "Captured in the name of the 2nd (Prince of Wales's Own) Gurkhas!"' No wonder that Roberts referred to the Gordon officer as 'the gallant and ever foremost Major White,' and that another eye-witness wrote: 'Under a Napoleon Major White would be a Marshal. At the head of his regiment he would make any battle in India safe.'

It is only a thousand pities that his entire regiment, with himself at the head of it, was

not, a few months later, present on Majuba Hill when this position was assaulted and taken by the Boers. That it was captured was mainly due to the circumstance that the holders of the hill consisted of a small heterogeneous force, including only a couple of companies of the gallant Gordons—the heroes of Charasiah, Kabul, and Kandahar —with no real unity of command or action, and insufficient ammunition. Had the hill been held by the entire battalion of the Gordons, with Stewart White, now Lieutenant-Colonel, at their head, the result would assuredly have been very different. For the disaster to a portion of his gallant regiment no one grieved more than their commander, and when, in 1899, he was sent out to South Africa to take command of the Natal field force, of which his own old Gordon battalion formed a part, he must have been thrilled by the reflection that the ways of fate are truly wonderful, and that if the mills of God grind slowly they grind exceeding small.

But in 1881 the 'Gay Gordons' had barely recovered from one Majuba when they were overtaken by another, and one which wounded their regimental pride still more

deeply. This was the year in which was introduced the linked battalion system of Mr. Cardwell; and the 92nd, lying encamped near Newcastle at the foot of the Drakensberg range, heard to their dismay that, under the new system, there had been created a regiment of Gordon Highlanders of which the 75th (Stirlingshire) was to be the 1st battalion, and they the 2nd! No wonder that at midnight on July 31, 1881, the officers and men of the 92nd formed themselves into a torchlight funeral procession, with Lieut.-Colonel White as one of the pall-bearers, to carry the effigy of an old Gordon Highlander to his grave amidst the muffled roll of drums and the wailing of the pipes, there to lie till the resurrection—which took place next day, when the old fellow was disentombed and riddled with bullets. At the same time the officers and men of the 75th—a regiment that had heretofore only worn the trews and were now to be indued with the kilt—was inscribing this epitaph on an obelisk at Malta:

Here lies the poor old 75th,
But, under God's protection,
They soon will rise in kilt and hose—
A glorious resurrection:

For, by the transformative powers
Of Parliamentary laws,
They go to bed the 75th,
To rise the Ninety-Twas.

On leaving South Africa the 92nd (2nd battalion Gordons) were quartered at Edinburgh, where they had the honour, under Colonel White, of providing the guard of honour and the colour-escort for the ceremony of depositing in the cathedral of St. Giles the old war-tattered colours of many of the Scottish regiments, there to tell to future generations the stirring story of how their forefathers fought for Queen and country.

From 'Auld Reekie,' and his beloved Gordons, White was called away to Egypt to serve as Assistant-Adjutant and Quartermaster-General during the Nile expedition for the relief of Khartoum; and, though new to this portion of Africa and all its ways, he was quick to distinguish himself in this fresh field of action by an administrative capacity equal to his approved courage.

Relieved from his staff duties on the Nile, Colonel White was now appointed to the command of the 2nd Brigade of the force of

10,000 men, under General Prendergast, which it had been found necessary to despatch to Burmah to coerce the obstinacy and quell the cruel pride of King Thebaw. His fellow brigadier was Major-General MacPherson, who had comported himself so gallantly in the Afghan wars, but who now succumbed to fever among the marshes of Mandalay. The land of the white elephant tried our soldiers severely. Prendergast's force moved up the Irrawaddy in a flotilla of boats, and now and again White with his brigade would be sent ashore to fight and force his way through the dense and dripping jungle so as to dispose of some stockaded fort which threatened our line of communication. At last after much guerilla warfare the expedition reached the capital, Mandalay, 'where the old flotilla lay,' and where no resistance was offered. To Colonel White fell the duty of occupying the palace, and of dethroning King Thebaw, who was sent down the river to Rangoon, on his way to India.

But it was only now that the difficulties of the enterprise on which we had embarked began to prove most serious. The country had been annexed, but it could not be

pacified. Unable to face British soldiers in the open, the Burmese did their best to wear them out by harassing guerilla warfare over a region as large as France—a region of fever and forest, and of 'sludgy creeks.' However, 'with his usual energy and shrewdness,' as one writer said, 'he proceeded to cover the country as far as he could with little garrisons, and to send flying columns to catch the robbers (dacoits) unawares. If you can imagine England covered with dense jungle, with scarcely any roads or bridges, and with a sweltering sun drawing up the moisture in dense white mists, and then imagine yourselves to be British soldiers trying to rout out those red robbers, who went forth by bands of tens, fifties, and hundreds, you will have some idea of General White's task.'

By request of the Viceroy, Lord Dufferin, Lord Roberts himself went to Burmah, where, as he afterwards wrote, 'General White had done well under very difficult circumstances. . . . Having been in constant correspondence with him, I had been kept informed of his plans, and, as his responsible chief I had approved of them.' Neverthe-

less, 'dacoity' continued to spread, and it was not till the beginning of 1889—four years after Colonel White had set foot in the country of Thebaw—that, by his indomitable pluck and perseverance—'his personal gallantry, sound judgment, and administrative ability'—he had completed his share of the herculean task of pacifying Upper Burmah; and he left the 'land of the golden umbrella,' a Knight of the Bath and a Major-General, 'for distinguished service in the field.' Lord Dufferin himself had formed the very highest opinion of the military talents of the man who had repeatedly thought of resigning because his chances of promotion seemed so hopeless, and had said that White was 'the most capable soldier he had ever met.'

In the following year Sir George was again wanted—this time to quell some unruly tribesmen on he North-Western frontier in India. 'The expedition (into the Zhob Valley),' wrote one of its historians, 'cost much laborious marching and road-making, but there were only a few insignificant skirmishes, the resistance of the tribes collapsing when they saw White's orce making its way over what they till then regarded as

ground that no army from India would attempt to traverse.' For 1,800 miles, or four and a half times the distance from London to Edinburgh, White's little force marched in cold and heat, over bleak savage mountains and through trackless gorges—thus bringing home to the native mind that there was no region in all the wide world so remote and inaccessible as not to be attainable by the long arm of England's power. Cæsar himself could not have conducted one of his punitive expeditions with more celerity and success.

No wonder, therefore, that when the post of Commander-in-Chief in India fell vacant in 1893, by the retirement of Lord Roberts, White, who had fought under him as a simple Major of the 'Gay Gordons' in the Afghan war, was appointed to succeed him—mainly, as it would appear, on the recommendation of the Viceroy, Lord Dufferin, who had conceived the highest opinion of his military ability. In certain circles there was a great outcry at this unwonted spectacle of a Major-General being promoted over the heads of so many of his seniors, Lieutenant-Generals, to the plum of his profession in India; but

judgment, not jobbery, was at the bottom of the appointment, which Sir George's five years' tenure of office—covering the period of several of our 'little wars' on the Indian frontier, including the Tirah campaign—completely justified; and when, on quitting India in 1898 to take up the appointment of Quartermaster-General in Pall Mall, he was treated to a banquet at Simla, he tersely expressed his own military character by saying: 'I am no Jingo. Those with whom I had the honour to be associated in the government of India would perhaps testify that I had been as anxious to steer clear of causes of war as any of my civil colleagues. . . . The quarrels in which we are now engaged (Tirah, &c.), and which are costing us untold gold, are none of our seeking; but, being in them, we hope to bear ourselves so that the opposer may beware of us for some time.'

Owing to the compound fracture of his leg from the kick of his horse before leaving India, his assumption of office in Pall Mall was retarded; and this office proving uncongenial to him, he accepted the governorship of Gibraltar, only to be called away from the

'Rock' to take command of the Natal field force, at the head of which it was firmly believed by all who knew him that he would prove true to the advice of Polonius to Laertes, to which he had alluded in his parting speech at Simla:

> Beware
> Of entrance to a quarrel; but, being in,
> Bear it that the opposer may beware of thee.

CHAPTER VI

FIELD-MARSHAL SIR DONALD MARTIN STEWART, BART., G.C.B., G.C.S.I., C.I.E.

GRIZZLED old Sir Donald Stewart, with his bushy white moustache and beetling brows —one of the heroes of the Indian Mutiny, Abyssinia, and the last Afghan War—was one of the most picturesque and most loudly cheered figures in the Diamond Jubilee procession of the Queen—a grim-looking but genial old warrior, whose features at once express the martial fire and dash of the Highland Celt with the shrewdness, doggedness, and sagacity of the Lowland Scot. For if Lords Wolseley and Roberts and Sir George White were Irishmen—by birth at least, if not descent—and if England could claim the exclusive honour of having contributed Sir Redvers Buller and Sir Evelyn Wood to the roll of her greatest living

Photo: Elliott & Fry, London.

FIELD-MARSHAL SIR DONALD STEWART.

soldiers, Scotland alone is entitled to the merit of having furnished India with a Commander-in-Chief bearing, like Alan Brek, a royal name.

Little certainly did Donald Stewart dream when, at the tender age of sixteen—having been born in 1824—he left his native north to serve the old 'John Company' with the 9th Bengal Infantry, that he would one day rise to the very top of his profession in the empire of the Grand Mogul. Like Dugald Dalgetty of Drumthwacket, Donald Stewart 'had learned Latin and logic at the Marischal College of Aberdeen;' and with this slender erudition as the basis of his subsequent accomplishments, together with a 'pair of stalwart arms and legs conform,' young Stewart, while still two years younger than Dalgetty, betook himself to the Indian wars, 'there to push his way as a cavalier of fortune.'

But Stewart's promotion, like that of his valorous countryman, Dalgetty, also 'came slow, my lord, dooms slow.' For fifteen years and more he served on the Peshawur frontier, but his life was as unexciting as it was uneventful, and he was unlucky enough to miss the fighting of 1841–42 in the Afghan

passes, with its frightful disasters and final triumphs. It was not till 1854 that Stewart, still a budding lieutenant, had his first experience of positive fighting with the wild tribes of the border—fighting which, in England, was overshadowed in interest by our contemporaneous war in the Crimea. But it brought him the rank of captain and a medal; and it had proved that he had utilised the first fifteen years of his service in acquiring an unrivalled knowledge of the frontier tribes and the native languages. The man was now complete in all the accomplishments appertaining to the perfect Anglo-Indian soldier. He was ready for any grand opportunity which might present itself, and that opportunity presently came in the bosom of the Mutiny which had burst forth at Meerut, and was fast spreading all over India, with its hellish headquarters at Delhi. How he was quick to profit by that opportunity we shall now see.

One fine day, Stewart, ragged and half starved, staggered into the camp of the Field Force before Delhi. But he had already been forestalled by a young artillery lieutenant, Frederick Sleigh Roberts by name,

who found it afterwards 'impossible to describe my pleasure at finding myself a member of a force which had already gained an imperishable renown.' There was a vacant post in the Quartermaster-General's department which Roberts coveted; but there was also a vacancy of a similar kind in the case of the Assistant Adjutant-General before Delhi, and to this post General Chamberlain wanted to appoint Roberts, who was in despair. 'I was waiting outside Sir Henry Barnard's tent,' he wrote, 'anxious to hear what decision had been come to, when two men rode up, both looking greatly fatigued and half-starved, one of them being Donald Stewart. He told me they had had a most adventurous ride, but before waiting to hear his story I asked Norman to suggest Stewart for the new appointment (D.A.A.G.)—a case of one word for Stewart and two for myself, I am afraid, for I had set my heart on returning to the Quartermaster-General's Department. And so it was settled to our mutual satisfaction—Stewart becoming the D.A.A.G. of the Delhi Field Force, and I the D.A.Q.M.G. with the Artillery.'

So thus it was that two ambitious young sons of Mars—one an Irishman, the other a Scot—made their first marked entrance on the stage of a military drama which was to have its *dénouement* in their successive appointment—the Highlander first, and then the Hibernian—to the chief command of the forces in India.

Yes, but wherever had Captain Donald Stewart popped up from in this jack-in-the box manner, and presented himself in the camp of the Field Force before Delhi? One often hears of officers leaving their regiments, but Donald Stewart was doomed to enjoy the weirdly unique experience of his regiment leaving *him*. When the Mutiny broke out, Stewart was with the headquarters of his regiment, the 9th Native Infantry, at Aligarh. One of the men, a Brahmin, was hanged for inciting his comrades to mutiny, and to Stewart, as interpreter (for to the 'Latin and logic which he had learned at the Marischal College of Aberdeen he had now added a consummate acquaintance with the tongues of Indiä), it fell to explain to the regiment on parade the why and wherefore of the exem-

plary execution—an explanation which was followed by all sorts of ominous confusion and defection, the plundering of the treasury, the breaking open of the gaol doors and the releasing of prisoners, and the departure of the sepoys in a body to join the mutineers inside Delhi.

To Delhi, accordingly, the outside of it at least, Stewart determined to follow his deserter men ; but first of all he repaired to Agra, where he was told by the Lieut. Governor, Mr. Colvin, that he had received despatches from the Government in Calcutta for the Commander-in-Chief, then understood to be with the army before Delhi. Stewart at once volunteered the forlorn task of delivering these despatches to their addressee, though seriously warned as to the desperate nature of the venture. He reached Muttra, thirty-five miles distant, without mishap—though the country was now all aflame with rebellion fierce and fell. In Muttra he was told that to stay there a moment longer would be certain death. A Brahmin provided him with an escort of two sowars (troopers) belonging to the Rajah of Bhartpur, with orders to accompany him

as far as Kosi. They were cut-throat-looking individuals, and Stewart felt rather inclined to dispense with their services; but, thinking it unwise to show any signs of distrust, he accepted them with the best grace he could. After riding for fifteen or sixteen miles his horse fell from exhaustion, on which his so-called escort laughed uproariously and galloped off, leaving him to his own devices. But neither sighs nor tears would bring the sowars back, and so, as they had erstwhile brought 'Willie' back to Melville Castle, Stewart took off his saddle and bridle and tramped to the nearest village, where he hoped to be able, by purchase or appropriation, to find a fresh mount, though all he could discover was a donkey grazing in a field—which, as the descendant of a race of inveterate cattle-lifters, he scrupled not to purloin. At Kosi they gave him bread and milk, but denied him a bed. They told him he must be off if he wished to save his skin, and he told them that the devil a foot would he budge until he got a horse. But all he could get was a pony, on which next morning he ambled into Jaipur camp, where he had to stay a week waiting

for a promised escort which was never produced. But as 'he that will to Cupar maun to Cupar,' so Donald Stewart determined to wait no longer, and departed for Delhi—Mr. Ford, a collector and magistrate, offering to go with him. At length, after infinite difficulty and danger—the ass-appropriator having enjoyed the guidance of a native cattle-lifter—the two struggled on, 'and at daybreak on 29th June the minarets of Delhi rose out of the morning mist, while an occasional shell might be seen bursting near the city.'

And thus it was that Donald Stewart—profiting by the opportunity, which comes to every man in the course of his life, if only he be prepared to embrace it—placed his foot on the first rung of the ladder which led him to fame and fortune. 'It is difficult,' wrote Lord Roberts, a lifelong friend and adviser of Stewart, 'to over-estimate the pluck and enterprise displayed by Stewart in this adventurous ride. It was a marvel that he ever reached Delhi. His coming there turned out to be the best thing that ever happened to him, for the qualities which prompted him to undertake and carried him

through his dangerous journey marked him as a man worthy of advancement and likely to do well.'

I may be thought to have dwelt disproportionately long on Stewart's ride from Agra to Delhi—a ride, for the rest, which has only been equalled since by the perilous ride from Ulundi to Durban during the Zulu war of the prince of war-correspondents, Archibald Forbes—who, hailing from the same part of Scotland as Donald Stewart, is also in feature almost his double; but it often happens that the detailed description of some prominent incident in a man's career will convey a better account of his character than all the rest of his exploits put together.

For his staff services at Delhi, Stewart was advanced to the rank of Major; and from Delhi he passed to Lucknow, where he served with equal brilliancy as A.A.G. to his countryman, Sir Colin Campbell, after which he was engaged in stamping out the rebellion in Rohilcund. The end of the Mutiny found him a Lieut.-Colonel, and he was further rewarded with the post of D.A.G. of the army in India—an army which, no longer in the hands of 'John Company,' had now become

British Imperial. Great was the difficulty of blending the old military system with the new, and of adapting our army to the altered conditions of our Indian dominion; but Colonel Stewart proved to be as deviceful in the bureau as he had been daring on the battle-field, and setting, in his native phrase, 'a stout heart to a stey brae,' he gradually got the better of the administrative burden which had been laid upon his shoulders.

But being, like the doughty Douglas of old, one of those soldiers who prefer the singing of the lark (and the whistling of bullets) to the squeaking of the mouse, Donald Stewart was only too delighted when entrusted with the command of the Bengal Brigade in the little army with which Sir Robert Napier was sent to Abyssinia to release a few British captives from the barbarously capricious power of King Theodore; and Major Roberts was his Assistant Q.M.G. In India, after the Mutiny, Stewart and Roberts had lived on the footing of a David and Jonathan; and it almost broke the heart of Roberts that, while Stewart gaily marched away into the interior at the head of his brigade, he himself had to remain behind at

Zoula, the landing-post on the Red Sea. Nevertheless, as it turned out, Stewart got no further on the forward road than Senafe, being thus prevented from taking part in the final assault and capture of Magdala, King Theodore's mountain-top citadel.

Stewart returned to India with the rank of Major-General, and for three years (1871–1874) he was again administratively employed, this time as Chief Commissioner for the Andaman Islands in the Bay of Bengal. But his tenure of office was overshadowed by a terrible event—the assassination of Lord Mayo when on a tour of inspection to the penal settlement which had been established there. Before his guards could interpose, a convict threw himself upon the Viceroy and stabbed him to death. 'I felt much for Donald Stewart,' wrote Roberts, 'to whom I knew such a terrible tragedy would be a heavy blow.'

And so it was. But from the receiving of moral shocks himself he was soon to proceed to the infliction of material blows of a very crushing kind upon others. In 1878 it had become necessary to compel the Ameer of Afghanistan to comply with certain demands

of ours, and for this purpose a triple-headed force was despatched from India into his dominions—one column on the right to move through the Khyber under one-armed Sir Sam Browne; the centre one led by Roberts, *viâ* the Kuram Valley; and that on the left to move by Quetta on Kandahar. Sir Donald Stewart, for he had now been knighted, was urgently telegraphed for to England to take the command of this left column of about 12,000. As it so happened, the only resistance encounted fell to Roberts with his 6,000 men at the Peiwar Kotal and elsewhere on this his first march to Kabul; and Sir Donald equally entered Kandahar, but without striking a blow.

Here for the present he remained while Roberts returned to India; but the latter had hardly got back to Simla before all the Empire was startled by the news of the massacre of the Cavagnari mission at Kabul, to which Roberts at once prepared to return with an avenging column. Sam Browne's Khyber force had been broken up, but Sir Donald Stewart was still at Kandahar, and word was accordingly sent to him 'to stop all regiments on their way back to India, and

hold himself fast.' 'Hold the fort, for I am coming!' was the virtual message flashed by Roberts to his comrade Stewart; and hold it he did with all the tenacity of his race until some little time after Roberts's second arrival at Kabul, when Sir Donald was ordered up with his column to that capital 'to take part in the pacification' of Northern Afghanistan.

And now began that march of Sir Donald from Kandahar to Kabul which in some respects was superior in merit even to that of Roberts's subsequent reverse march from Kabul to Kandahar, though, owing to certain accidents of circumstance, it was the feat of Roberts which mostly impressed the popular imagination, much in the same manner as the charge of the Light Brigade at Balaclava—thanks, among other things, to Tennyson's lyric—has erroneously taken its place in the same popular imagination as a much finer performance than the equally heroic and far more effective charge of the Heavy Brigade on the same occasion.

Leaving Kandahar on March 30, 1880, with his little column of 7,000 men, Stewart reached Kabul, a distance of over 300 miles, on May 5, which was a period in all of

thirty-five days, while Roberts with his 10,000 men covered the same reverse route in twenty days. But the column of Roberts was amply provisioned, and had nothing to do but march; while Stewart was hampered by the want of food, and, what was still worse, he was harassed by swarms of ferocious enemies whom time and again he had to stop and beat out of his way.

This was more particularly the case at Ahmed Khel, near Ghuznee, where Sir Donald and his little column were set upon and nearly swallowed up by ferocious hordes of Afghans. Twice the Ghuznee swordsmen nearly hewed a passage to where he stood, and for a long time the issue of the battle was doubtful. But as he had been bidden to 'hold the fort' and 'stand fast' at Kandahar, and had manfully done so, so now again he held his ground unflinchingly at the head of his troops among the surging hordes of the Prophet, calmly noting every feature of the fray, and directing, as if on parade, the movements of his infantry and the slashing charges of his native cavalry, till at last the shattered enemy hesitated, reeled, and finally broke into headlong flight all along the line,

leaving 3,000 of their number dead or wounded on the ground.

Sir Donald's way was now comparatively clear to Kabul, which he at last reached, and, being senior to his dear friend Roberts, assumed the supreme command there. Yet when, on news of the disaster at Maiwand reaching Sir Donald's camp, it became necessary to send a relieving force back to Kandahar, he was generous enough to entrust the command thereof to Roberts, instead of taking it—and all the kudos thereto appertaining—to himself. But if there was thus generosity on the side of Stewart, there was as much justice as generosity in the subsequent admission of Lord Roberts that 'it was his gallant friend, Sir Donald Stewart, who showed him the way from Kabul to Kandahar.' Between those rival paladins of the Empress-Queen there was indeed as little jealousy as between Nelson and his admirals, or only jealousy of the kind which prompted the hero of Trafalgar to exclaim to Captain Blackwood, when the *Royal Sovereign* was pressing alone into the midst of the combined fleets of France and Spain: 'See how that noble fellow, Colling-

wood, takes his ship into action. How I envy him!'

For his services in Afghanistan Sir Donald received the thanks of both Houses of Parliament and a baronetcy, while in the following year he was made Commander-in-Chief in India, an appointment which he held till 1885, when he was succeeded by the Castor—as he himself had been the Pollux—of Indian warfare in the person of Lord Roberts. He then returned home to receive a well-earned sinecure as Governor of Chelsea Hospital and the baton of a Field-Marshal. As Sir Donald had shown Lord Roberts the way from Kabul to Kandahar, so he also, during his tenure of office as chief of the Indian army, planned that scheme of defence, calculated to render the Empire at once strong without and safe within, which was finally carried out by his successor; and altogether he will live in the pages of Indian history as one of the Empress-Queen's most redoubtable and most revered Knights of her Round Table—without fear and without reproach.

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CHAPTER VII

MAJOR-GENERAL LORD KITCHENER OF KHARTOUM, K.C.B., K.C.M.G.

THE soldiers hitherto dealt with in this series, though most of them still actively belong to the present, may be regarded as men of the past—that is to say, men who have long ago, in virtue of their superior age and opportunities, made their mark on the military history of their times. But there is also now a gratifyingly large class of what may be called 'coming men' in the army; and most conspicuous, beyond all question, among those shining lights of the younger generation of our Generals—for he is not yet fifty—is Lord Kitchener, the conqueror of the Atbara and the re-conqueror of Khartoum. No wonder that there is a rule for retiring officers out of the army after attaining a certain age, for the army, above all others, is the career where,

Photo: Hayman, Cairo.

MAJOR-GENERAL LORD KITCHENER.

as Lord Beaconsfield said, 'the world belongs to the young.' The Duke of Wellington was only forty-six—the same age as his antagonist Napoleon—when he won Waterloo, and what a career of victory each of these commanders had pursued before that! It was some little time before Kitchener found his opportunity, his *carrière ouverte aux talents*; but when once this did present itself in Egypt, he shot ahead of his comrades, not so much with the brilliancy of a meteor as with the steady speed of a steam-propelled machine, complete in all its parts and warranted against any kind of breakdown.

It seems but a short time since the Franco-German war, yet that was the year in which Horatio Herbert Kitchener first got his commission in the Royal Engineers, his scientific habit of mind inclining him by preference to this intellectual branch of the service, which has nevertheless produced some of the best fighting men in the army—witness Sir Gerald Graham of Suakim region battle-renown, and others. It has been said of Kitchener that, before going to Chatham, he had gone to France as a boy volunteer to begin his military career by

fighting the Germans, but the statement is untrue. Possibly his sympathies might have inclined him this way, seeing that through his mother, a Chavalier, he had inherited French Huguenot blood (like Lord Roberts), which always makes a very fine mixture with the Anglo-Saxon. The fact that the re-conqueror of Khartoum, the son of Lieutenant-Colonel Kitchener, of the 13th Dragoons, happened to be born in Ireland did not make him an Irishman in the ethnological sense, the real seat of his family being at Aspall, in Suffolk, a name which is now part of his peerage title. As Sir Evelyn Wood was an 'Essex calf,' so Herbert Kitchener may be said to have been a son of 'silly Suffolk,' though certainly one who hadn't a single silly tooth in all his head.

It was more than ten years before he got his first chance in the field in which he was fated to become the most conspicuous figure. Jericho and Jerusalem, more than Cairo or Khartoum, were the localities that first absorbed his energies. From 1874 to 1878 he was employed on survey service in Palestine, being at last in command of the party which carried out the mapping of Galilee.

In 1878 he was sent to our newly acquired possession of Cyprus, to organise the Land Courts, a task which occupied him until Sir Charles Wilson accepted the post of Commissioner in Anatolia, when he appointed Kitchener Vice-Consul for the parts of Erzeroum. In 1881 Kitchener was back in Cyprus, and his survey of the island served as the basis of a map published by Stanford.

Next year saw, at Tel-el-Kebir, the collapse of Arabi's rebellion, when it became necessary for England to take in hand the reorganisation of the Egyptian army, of which Sir Evelyn Wood was appointed the Commander, or Sirdar, a post not to be confounded with the commandership of the British garrisons in Egypt. Tired of surveying and vice-consuling, Kitchener volunteered for the new service, and he was one of the original five-and-twenty British officers who set to work on the Egyptian army under its first English Sirdar, the hero of Kamboula. His lucky selection for this service was the making of him, as well as of Egypt, and he came to the work with a professional and intellectual outfit possessed by none of his comrades. His years of surveying and pro-

consuling in the East had made him intimately acquainted with the character and language of the race of which he was to prove the conqueror, and it really seemed as if Providence had thus put him into training as one of its special instruments in the cause of civilisation employed to emancipate one of the darkest regions of the Dark Continent from the most atrocious barbarism and despotism that ever scourged the human race. He was the right man in the right place, quite as certainly as that could ever have been said of any one.

He commenced his wonderful career in Egypt as second in command of a regiment of native cavalry. Kitchener, the burrowing sapper, now became a *beau sabreur*, for your true soldier can turn his hand to any kind of service. Stories have been told of the astonishing way in which he drilled and organised his squadrons into shape, for under such a commander 'his men,' as one of his comrades remarked, 'simply *had* to do it.' Within two years astonishing progress had been made in the creation of the new Egyptian army, but the disasters which overtook portions of it in the Eastern Soudan—at El

Teb and elsewhere—at the hands of Osman Digna's ferocious hordes, showed that in discipline and steadiness they were still not a match for the semi-savage swordsmen and spearmen of the false Prophet. It was only with the aid of the British troops operating round Suakim that Osman Digna could be held in check, and then it became necessary to send an expedition for the relief of Khartoum.

But pending the advance of this expedition it behoved us to secure the friendship, or at least the neutrality, of some of the doubtful tribes beyond Abu Hamed—Bisharreens and others—and Major Kitchener, whose knowledge of the Arabic dialects was unrivalled, was selected for the purpose. Taking his life in his hand, and accompanied only by Lieutenant (now General) Rundle, he plunged into the Korosko desert, and in less than three weeks, by his tact and persuasiveness, he had succeeded in securing the services of 2,000 Arabs and establishing a chain of outposts extending to the Red Sea. There was something in this tall, fearless, and frank young Englishman which impressed and won over the crafty Arabs, much in the

same way as, during the Crimean war, the Turks at Constantinople had been influenced by our 'Great Elchi,' Stratford de Redcliffe.

Kitchener's success in this no less difficult than delicate mission marked him out for special service on the Intelligence Staff of Lord Wolseley's Nile expedition, under Sir Charles Wilson, his old chief in Palestine and Asia Minor; and he it was who, at the head of a few cavalry scouts, piloted Sir Herbert Stewart's column of 1,200 men across the Bayuda desert from Korti to Gadkul. For his services in this unfortunate campaign, for his cool daring, resourcefulness, and knowledge of local conditions, he was repeatedly mentioned in despatches and raised to the rank of Lieut.-Colonel.

After an interval of service as Commissioner at Zanzibar—for boundary-drawing, which he performed with his usual discretion—he returned to Egypt, and in 1886 was appointed Commander at Suakim and Governor of the Red Sea Littoral, it having now become clear that Colonel Kitchener was endowed with just as much genius for administration as for soldiering. Like Frederick

the Great, his first battle was a failure; but Kitchener, like the great king, was one of those men to whom failure is the certain parent of success. Learning that Osman Digna was preparing to attack him, Kitchener, believing with Bismarck that the best parry is ever the stroke, resolved on being beforehand with the rebel chief, and led about 500 men (Soudanese) against his position at Handoub. But in the ardour of their assault the Soudanese troops were carried too far, and became exposed to a galling fire, Kitchener himself being severely wounded in the face. Yet by cleverly handling his mounted men he managed to bring off his force in good order.

With Kitchener to see a defect is to remedy it; and thus it was that when, a few months later, being now Adjutant-General of the Egyptian army, he led his Soudanese brigade into action under the Sirdar, General Grenfell, at Gemaizah, his men proved very different from what they had been at Handoub. 'The Soudanese soldiers,' wrote Grenfell, 'behaved not only with gallantry but with steadiness. They advanced for 300 yards under fire without firing a shot, and even

when the trenches were reached they did not entirely lose their formation,' which was quite as much of a compliment to Kitchener as it was to his men.

He had already made immense progress with the fashioning of the instrument with which he was to create his masterpiece ; and the victory of Toski in the following year was by the Sirdar (Grenfell) attributed in great part to the 'activity and forethought' and skilful 'dispositions which his lieutenant had made.' At the head of 1,500 mounted men Kitchener drew the fire of the Mahdi's host, and kept them in play until the arrival of the foot-folk enabled the Sirdar to attack, when Kitchener with his cavalry hurled himself upon the flank of the Dervishes and flung them in headlong rout across the desert —a victory which stemmed the tide of Arab invasion for more than another year.

An Intelligence officer of the first order, he had shown himself to be a tactician second to none, as well as an administrator of proved ability. As the instrument of Providence the man was rapidly maturing for the task awaiting him ; and his final opportunity came when, in 1890, he was appointed to succeed

Sir Francis Grenfell as Sirdar of the Egyptian army. In 1862 Bismarck was called to the helm of political affairs in Berlin, and by the year 1870 he had fought three campaigns and re-created the German Empire. In 1890 Kitchener was placed at the helm of military affairs at Cairo, and by 1898 he had fought three campaigns and re-conquered the Soudan. In each case the period of activity was just eight years, and it would really be hard to say which was the bigger personal feat—the re-creation of Germany or the re-conquest of the Soudan.

And as Bismarck re-created Germany in spite of the passive resistance of his timorous and short-sighted master the King of Prussia, so Kitchener passed to the re-conquest of the Soudan in spite of the personal ill-will and stupidity of his quasi-sovereign, the Khedive of Egypt. A prey to the intriguing influence of the malevolent French, Abbas lost no opportunity of insulting the English officers in his service ; and this petty malignancy of his reached a climax when, in the course of a tour to his southern frontier, he commented most offensively on some Egyptian regiments, for whose discipline the Sirdar was of course

responsible. Thereupon Kitchener threatened to resign, with the result that he was made a K.C.M.G. by the Queen, while the Khedive himself was obliged to eat his own insulting words by issuing a general order in praise of the discipline of his army and its British officers.

Possessing the fullest confidence of his own Government as well as the enforced goodwill of the Khedive, Sir Herbert Kitchener was now free to devote himself to the gigantic task on which he entered two years later—the recovery of the Soudan from barbarism and bloodshed, and the avenging of Gordon.

The events of the last few years, with their three Egyptian campaigns, are still too fresh in the public memory to require anything but a general reference in a personal sketch like this. But it may be remarked that never before in the history of British, or indeed any other warfare, was there displayed such perfect adaptation of means to end, such patience and perseverance in the attainment of an object, such harmony of the military machine in all its parts, such elaborations of the minutest details, and such

perfect subordination and discipline among his co-adjutors and troops, as enabled Sir Herbert Kitchener at last to plant the British and Egyptian standards on the blood-stained battlements of Khartoum. Kitchener had been set a task, and he was allowed to execute it in his own way. He was hampered by the rulings—or over-rulings—of no Government, no War Office, no Aulic Council. Every one had perfect faith in him, and this general confidence was justified by each successive step he took.

Wellington used to say that the best General was the one who made the fewest mistakes, but Kitchener ever seemed to be above error of any kind. It has also been said that the man who cannot make a mistake can never make anything, but Kitchener of Khartoum appeared to be an exception to this rule. His re-conquest of the Soudan was a splendid exhibition of one-man power in the organisation and conduct of war. It is true he was served by brilliantly able co-adjutors—his Rundles, his Hunters, his Wingates, his Slatins, his MacDonalds, and his Maxwells. But of all these subordinates he was as much the directing soul as Moltke

was of all the Commanders of the German army. Moltke himself would have been the first to admire, and even envy, the triumph of military organisation which culminated on the plains of Omdurman—a triumph which never could have been possible had not Kitchener contrived to make the construction of the Nile Valley railway practically keep pace with his own progress towards the goal of all his efforts.

The Crimea and Khartoum indicate the nadir and the zenith of our military system. The army of 25,000 which we first landed in the Crimea had been practically rendered non-effective in five months mainly from the lack of means to convey food and stores a distance of eight miles from Balaclava, our base of supply, to the trenches before Sebastopol; while, on the other hand, our re-conquest of the Soudan was mainly due to the circumstance that Kitchener was able to feed and supply his army of about the same size by means of the railway which he may be said to have ever kept laying down behind him as if it had been a mere telegraph wire. Gordon had gone to Khartoum on the back of a camel. Wolseley had sought to take his

men thither in Canadian river-boats; but Kitchener was quick to perceive that the only way to get to the capital of the Soudan was on the back of 'Puffing Billy.' Steam, he saw, was the only possible means of enabling him to rise superior to the immense impediments of the desert, which had defied the most persistent efforts of all previous invaders—steam, and military science of the most advanced kind.

Like the professional engineer that he was, his method of attack on the stronghold of Mahdism was by zigzag and parallel, and he may be said to have literally sapped his way up the valley of the Nile from Cairo, or at least from Korosko, to Khartoum. He struck his first parallel at Firket, his second at Dongola, and his third at the Atbara, taking about a year to advance from one position to another, and then, collecting all his strength, and starting up out of his advanced trenches, he made a final dash for the stronghold of Mahdism, only to be encountered by all the armed strength of the Khalifa which had suddenly made its appearance on the glacis of that fortress at Omdurman.

How the battle of Omdurman was fought

and won is still remembered by all; and perhaps it is safe to say that no prouder or more pathetic moment was ever experienced by any man than by Kitchener when at last he stood on the steps of the ruined palace where Gordon had sealed his devotion to his country with his blood—stood there surrounded by representatives of all the units of his avenging host, British, Egyptian, and Soudanese, and gave the order for the hoisting of the Union Jack and the Khedive's flag on the ruined wall. It was a solemn scene—the transformation scene, so to speak, of the bloody drama of the Soudan—and was as well worthy of the brush of a great historical painter as the proclamation of the German Empire in the Hall of Mirrors in the palace of Versailles. For here, too, in the ruined palace of Gordon at Khartoum—in deed, at least, if not in word—there had also been at last proclaimed the dominion of our Empress-Queen, 'vom Fels zum Meer'—from the mountains of Uganda to the Mediterranean Sea. Proclaimed in deed, if not in word, yet defiantly denied by the fatuous French, who had in the meanwhile cropped up at Fashoda; and to the laurels

which Kitchener had plucked as a soldier he was now to add the fame of a first-rate diplomatist in dealing with the untenable pretensions of Major Marchand and his fellow 'emissaries of civilisation' on the White Nile.

Little wonder that, on his return to England, this foremost fighting man and Empire-maker of ours was received with an immense outburst of popular enthusiasm and heaped with every kind of honour; that he was banqueted in the City, and lauded equally by the chiefs of both political parties, by Lord Salisbury and Lord Rosebery; that he was made a peer of the realm as well as Governor-General of the Soudan; and presented with a grant of 25,000*l.* for his own private use, apart from the 100,000*l.* and more which the public readily subscribed at his suggestion for the purpose of founding a Gordon Memorial College at Khartoum, to which the railway would also be soon extended. Never had any campaign of such duration and magnitude been conducted so cheaply. It had cost less than two and a half millions, including 760 miles of railway, which remained a very valuable asset.

A year of Lord Kitchener's wise and energetic governorship of the Soudan had not elapsed before the task of re-conquest may be said to have been completed by the final defeat and death of the Khalifa at the hands of the Sirdar's able lieutenant, Sir Francis Wingate, and by the occupation of El-Obeid, near which there had been enacted what might be called the first scene in the long and bloody drama of the Dervish war, when Hicks Pasha and his army were utterly annihilated by the hordes of the Mahdi in November 1883.

Kitchener of Khartoum may thus, like Alexander of Macedon, have been sighing to think that there was nothing left for him to conquer, when suddenly he received a telegram from Lord Wolseley asking him to accept the post of Chief of the Staff to Roberts of Kandahar, who had been called upon to assume supreme command of all our forces in South Africa in succession to Sir Redvers Buller, and thus restore to the British arms the prestige which had been impaired by the Boers at Magersfontein, Stormberg, and Colenso. This combination of men to form the new 'brain of our army'

in the field was hailed with a sense of relief and satisfaction by the entire nation—the whole Empire—seeing that in every respect the two men formed the complement of one another, and thus offered a guarantee of our ultimate triumph in the war.

CHAPTER VIII

MAJOR-GENERAL HECTOR ARCHIBALD MACDONALD, C.B., D.S.O., A.D.C.

'My name is Norval! on the Grampian hills
My father feeds his flocks—a frugal swain,
Whose constant care was to increase his store
And keep his only son, myself, at home.
For I had heard of battles, and I longed
To follow to the field some warlike lord:
And Heaven soon granted what my sire denied.'

Homes 'Douglas.'

IT used to be said that every French soldier carried a field-marshal's baton in his knapsack; but it is no longer the French soldier of whom this may exclusively be declared, seeing that his British comrade is now able to purchase the same privilege with the Queen's shilling. It is true that our military annals do not yet record any instance of a soldier who had risen from the very lowest to the very highest rung in the ladder of his

Photo: Lafayette, Dublin.

MAJOR-GENERAL HECTOR MACDONALD.

career—as was repeatedly the case with the generals of Napoleon ; but such distinction is now much easier of attainment in our reformed army than it ever was before—our army which, ceasing to be a mere asylum for the outcast and the criminal, has now become a career for the respectable and the ambitious. Scarcely a week passes without a 'Gazette' announcing several elevations from the ranks; and of those 'rankers' Hector Archibald MacDonald may be selected as the most striking example of how a humbly born man, in these democratic days of personal merit and no favour, may rise to high military position.

Addressing the boys of the Duke of York's military school in the summer of 1899, Lord Wolseley said that 'the days were now long gone in which it could be said that only birth could put men forward ; worth was now regarded more than birth. In the Khartoum campaign, amongst those who led her Majesty's and the Egyptian troops, was one whose name had now become a household word, not only in Scotland, where he was born, but in every part of the Queen's dominions. It would be difficult to find an

officer who had led his men better in action than had Brigadier-General MacDonald, who entered the army as a private soldier, determined to rise, and, if possible, reach a high position; and who had now not only become a colonel, but had the honour of being an aide-de-camp to the Queen.'

The life-story of such a self-made soldier must be at once interesting and stimulating. He was a true son of the soil, from which all the military and all the manliest virtues ever spring. Like most distinguished Scotsmen, General MacDonald would appear to be a blend of the Celt and the Saxon; for his father was a Gaelic MacDonald cultivating a small farm at Rootfield, Muir-of-Ord, in the shire of Ross, and thereto, like Carlyle's father, adding the business of a stonemason; while his mother, Ann Boyd, was of Lowland extraction, being descended, it is said, from the Ayrshire Boyds represented by the Earls of Kilmarnock—another instance of the truth of the French saying that 'good blood never belies itself.'

Be that as it may, the mixed blood—Highland and Lowland—that thus ran in Hector MacDonald's veins made him, like

young Norval, rebel against every calling but the career of arms, and prompted him to exchange the yard-measure of an effeminate counter-jumper for the musket of a son of Mars. For an adverse fate had willed that, after commencing life in a very humble manner indeed in the town of Dingwall, young MacDonald should in the meanwhile find no better advancement than an apprentice's position in a 'tartan warehouse' at Inverness. Yet what MacDonald wanted was, not the tartan of an Inverness warehouse, but the tartan of a Highland regiment; and at last, in his eighteenth year, he found this among the ranks of the Gordon Highlanders, whom the beautiful Duchess had kissed into being towards the end of the last century, and who had a roll of military glory inferior to none.

But before joining the 'gay Gordons,' MacDonald had thoroughly learned his drill by serving for a year in the 'Merchants' Company' of the Inverness Highland Volunteers commanded by the bearer of a great clan-name—Cluny MacPherson of Cluny. This was the year of the Franco-German war, which sent such a wave of the martial

spirit all over this country—a wave which, among other things, carried Hector MacDonald on its crest from the counter of the 'tartan warehouse' in Inverness to the counter-scarp of Fort George, where he asked for and readily obtained admission into the ranks of the Ninety Twa's. For what recruiting sergeant would have been so silly as to refuse such a strapping young Highlander as this? When MacDonald, with the filial piety of his race, intimated to his father the step he was about to take, the severe parent—who probably looked upon the army as so many of the 'unco guid' in Scotland then did and still do, as a mere asylum for ne'er-do-weels—is said to have replied, with something of scornful anger in his voice, that 'it was the only thing he was fit for.' This was certainly true, though not in the sense implied by the honest crofter of the Muir-of-Ord.

MacDonald had not been many weeks among the Gordons before he attained the rank of lance-corporal—his previous experience as a volunteer and his educational attainments having marked him out for speedy promotion; and then he was drafted out to

India to join the head-quarters of his regiment, little thinking, doubtless, when passing through the Suez Canal, that Egypt would one day yet be the scene of his most famous exploits. His training for the next eight years was of a very severe kind, but one which made him a perfect soldier. There was plenty of route-marching to do under a burning sun—1,000 miles or so at a time, and routine duties which may well have caused MacDonald to exclaim with Dalgetty 'that I learned the rules of the service so tightly that I am not likely to forget them in a hurry.' He was also the witness of scenes well calculated to impress him with the grandeur of the Empire and the seriousness of the task falling to the army as its main supporter; as when, for example, the Gordons furnished a guard of honour to the Prince of Wales at Lahore during his progress through his oriental heritage, and again when they were present at Delhi on the grand ceremonial occasion of the Queen being proclaimed Empress of India.

By this time MacDonald had risen to the rank of colour-sergeant, and in connection with his promotion to the grade inferior to

this he once told the following story at one of the many banquets given in his honour on his return from Omdurman. Colonel MacDonald said: 'When I was about to be promoted to the rank of sergeant, the commanding officer called for me and said, "Corporal MacDonald, I have no fault to find with you, and I am going to promote you to the rank of sergeant. Remember this, that a sergeant in the 92nd Highlanders is equal to a Member of Parliament in the United Kingdom." I therefore felt it to be my duty to strive as much as I could to attain to something at least equal to a Member of Parliament.'

As a matter of positive fact MacDonald was soon to have an opportunity of serving his country with his claymore in a manner infinitely more substantial than the way in which it is generally served by the 'clish-maclaver' of our parliamentary spouters. Lord Roberts had but barely returned to India from his first successful march to Kabul 1878–79, when it became necessary to return thither to avenge the massacre of the Cavagnari mission, and his avenging host now included what he himself called

'that grand regiment, the Gordon Highlanders.' 'Little Bobs' and his staff, with a cavalry escort, were threading the Shutargardan pass 'when,' as he wrote, 'at the narrowest part of the defile we found the passage blocked by some 2,000 Afghans, and as we approached a volley was fired from a party concealed by some rocks on our left. . . . The Highlanders, supported by some dismounted cavalry, cleared away the enemy to the north, but as they clung to the precipitous hills on the south we had to wait till the main body of the escort came up, when they were speedily dispersed. Meanwhile a sharp little engagement had taken place further up the gorge, and as we advanced we could see the enemy retiring before a detachment of the 92nd Highlanders under Colour-Sergeant Hector MacDonald, and of the 3rd Sikhs under Jemadar Sher Mahomed, a native of Kabul. The manner in which the Colour-Sergeant and native officer handled their men gave me a high opinion of them both.'

A little later, while the fighting was taking place in front of Charasia, 'the hills on both flanks of my camp,' wrote Lord

Roberts, 'were crowded with the enemy, anxiously watching the result. They did not approach within the cavalry patrols, but one party caused so much trouble to a picquet by firing into it that it became necessary to dislodge it, a service which was performed in a very daring manner by a few of the 92nd under Lieutenant Grant and Colour-Sergeant Hector MacDonald, the same non-commissioned officer who had a few days before so distinguished himself in the Hazardarakht defile.'

In the battles around Kabul MacDonald again bore himself with such intelligence and bravery that he was presented with a commission on the field, with the cannon-thunder still in the air ; and not only with a commission but also with a claymore—the first of a large number of swords of honour he was to receive—which had been subscribed for by his brother officers, who warmly welcomed the Colour-Sergeant to their mess. It often happens that a soldier is raised from the ranks, but it is very rare indeed for a man to receive a commission in his own regiment, the custom of the service being against the intimate association of officers with a man

who had previously been their subordinate, and who, in nine cases out of ten, whatever his personal merits as a soldier, is their social inferior.

But there was nothing of this about MacDonald, who was one of Nature's gentlemen, with all the native graces of speech and manner which are rarely wanting in a true born son of the hills. The Queen has recorded that when first she went to Scotland, and was entertained by the Duke of Athol, she was much impressed by the kilted retainers of his Grace—ghillies, gamekeepers, and the like—who had all the easy air of gentlemen, and it was from such a distinguished race of men that Hector MacDonald had sprung. In addition to being a born soldier, he was also a born gentleman; a son of the soil, he was a fit associate for the sons of its lords. In nine cases out of ten, it is easy to spot the 'ranker'—that is, the officer who has risen from the ranks—but in the speech and demeanour of Colonel Hector MacDonald there is nothing to distinguish the son of the peasant-farmer from the son of the finished peer.

As for the man, here is a sketch of him by

a distinguished journalist (Mr. James Milne) and countryman: 'He is broad of chest, but if ever he puts on all his medals and orders there will not be much room to spare. The whole figure is shapely, sinewy, the kind of framework that the mind governing it can take anywhere and do anything with. It has grace, distinction, all those attributes which you mean when you speak of style. In actual stature he is not, perhaps, more than five feet ten inches. Typically Highland also is his face, alike in its regular contour and in its expression. You would say broadly that it is something between square and oval, with rather prominent cheek bones, and that under it lies action or sentiment, as the case might be. Colonel MacDonald's face, it strikes you, could in a tense moment, when the march was on or the battle going, become a perfectly cut square, a challenge to every side, hard, almost relentless. The cheek bones are prominent at the base as well as at the top; they suggest the strenuous, determined, indomitable man. You think of the tramp of armed men who have no sort of idea of turning back. Even a scowl might gather upon the brow, causing the eyes under

it to grow cold, as an angry shower scurries down the side of a Highland hill to ruffle the lake at the foot. When the weather has cleared again, it holds naught but sunshine and laughter.'

After taking a foremost part in Roberts's famous march from Kabul to Kandahar, and contributing with the longest list of casualties to his crowning victory at the latter place, the Gordons landed in Natal, on their way home, just in time to send a couple of their companies to become involved in the disaster of Majuba; and it was here, even more conspicuously perhaps than on the battlefields of Afghanistan, that the personal bravery of MacDonald shone out. On the panic spreading, he drew his revolver and threatened to shoot any man who passed him towards the rear, and when at last, after long hours of desperate resistance, the Boers made a rush to overpower him, he knocked one down with his fist and floored another with a kick in the stomach. A Boer was covering him with his rifle, when another shouted out to 'spare that brave man!' For a brave fighter ever admires and respects a brave foe. MacDonald was thus spared and taken prisoner; but his

claymore was soon restored to him by the generous Boer General, who, noticing the flattering inscription on the blade from MacDonald's brother officers, said that such a sword had been long enough separated from such a soldier. With all their faults, it must be owned that the Boers are capable of chivalry.

The Gordons had the good fortune to be engaged in the Khartoum relief expedition of 1884–5, but the bad luck to be out of the serious part of the fighting, though they gained the second prize offered by Lord Wolseley for the quickest passage in row-boats up the Nile. Yet though MacDonald had thus missed the fighting, he had now found the field of his true calling in life as a kind of Scoto-Koptic 'Old Dessauer,' or sublimated drill-sergeant of the new Egyptian army. He, the Gordon Highlander, had gone to Egypt with the expedition that failed to relieve the heroic Gordon, and remained behind to fashion that fighting instrument which was at last to cover its chief creators with glory on the 'stricken field' of Omdurman.

A minor staff appointment as garrison-

adjutant at Assiout in Upper Egypt led to MacDonald's appointment, in 1885, to the Egyptian gendarmerie as organised by poor Baker Russell. With this force he served three years—no longer wearing the plumed bonnet, but the tasseled fez—during which time he not only mastered Arabic, but also acquired that intimate knowledge of the character and quality of the native soldier which enabled him to lead them so well. For the next few years his daily life was drill, drill, drill—the slow perfecting of the fighting machine, for which, with his long training, no one was better fitted.

The time soon came to put his work to the test, and MacDonald was in all the battles that were won by the Sirdar, Sir Francis Grenfell. He was at Gemaizah, and again at Toski, when the Egyptian levies really showed what they were worth. MacDonald's reward for this campaign was the Distinguished Service Order, and the firm establishment of his reputation as 'fighting Mac,' as well as 'fashioning Mac.' Two years later came the capture of Tokar with more medals and clasps, and best of all a step in substantive rank as major in the

Royal Fusiliers, a London regiment which is still proud to own him, though he has never led it, and is never now likely to lead it, into battle.

The next five years were a period of preparation under the new Sirdar, Sir H. Kitchener, for the final advance on Khartoum; and MacDonald, in command of a black (Soudanese) battalion, the famous 9th—called by courtesy the 3rd battalion of the Cameron Highlanders from their battle-association with that famous corps—moved from garrison to garrison, now at Wady Halfa, now Korosko, now Assouan, 'busy always, always hopeful, always expectant of the day that was to prove the value of his steady and unstinting labours.' That day at last dawned with the fight at Firket, and closed with the crowning victory at Omdurman. In these and all the intervening battles and strategic stages—Dongola, Abu Hamed, Berber, the Atbara—'fighting Mac' with his magnificent Soudanese brigade (9th, 11th, and 13th battalions) was ever to the front, a brigade formed of some of the finest soldierly material in the world.

Between MacDonald and his ebon-skinned men, whom he had painstakingly nursed from

the position of helots into that of heroes not inferior in discipline or bravery to his own Gordon Highlanders, there was mutual devotion of the most touching kind; so that at the Atbara and other battles, without the knowledge of their chief, they told off some of their own men to keep a private eye on their beloved commander and see that he came by no sort of scaith. For to lose MacDonald would indeed have been to lose their tender father and their truest friend. Once during the heat of action, when first they went under fire, those Soudanese, in their ardour, got so completely out of hand that their Commander fairly lost his temper, and, when he came to the end of his Arabic, scolded them soundly in Gaelic or in broad Scotch. Then they gathered about him and, stroking him down on both legs, said: 'Don't be afraid, we are here and we shall protect you. Have no fear, it is all right.'

Yes, it was all right—not only then, but also on the field of Omdurman, where MacDonald's invincible Black Brigade was on the right of the fighting line, as it had also been his clan which, having formed the right of Bruce's army at Bannockburn, had caused

the crown of the Stuarts to be lost to Prince Charlie because of their resentful inactivity at not being accorded the same privilege at Culloden. But the right which had been denied them on Drummossie Muir was restored to them at Omdurman in the person of their foremost fighting man in the Anglo-Egyptian army, who now brilliantly atoned for the sullen supineness of his clansmen at Culloden by helping to add another gem to the imperial coronet of the Guelph Queen.

The first phase of the battle was over; the first attack of the Dervishes had been repulsed and Kitchener's Anglo-Egyptian army was advancing on Omdurman, when suddenly its right flank was imperilled by a roaring onrush of the ferocious foe from behind some rising ground. It was MacDonald himself who had provoked this second assault. Not the man, with his peculiar Highland blood, to remain on the defensive when he could get an opportunity of hitting out, he had espied this deluge of Dervishes and begun to play upon them with his guns. On they came, and he was ready for them with his infantry, which he wheeled into line, and pivoted about to meet every fresh

development of the Dervish attack with a cool and masterly ease that 'caused every tactician in the army,' as one of the war-correspondents wrote, 'to be delirious in his praise. "Cool as on parade" is an old phrase. MacDonald Bey was much cooler. Beneath the strong square-hewn face you could tell that the brain was working as if packed in ice,' though he was suffering acute pain at the time from the kick of a horse. 'He saw everything, knew what to do, knew how to do it; did it . . . all saw him and knew that they were being nursed to triumph.'

Little wonder that on his return to England Major-General MacDonald — a self-made soldier who, before the age of forty-five, had been mentioned twelve times in despatches and been the recipient of ten decorations with a dozen clasps, besides having been in a score of minor affrays—little wonder, I say, that such a fighting man was accorded a popular reception even more enthusiastic in some respects than that which had been extended to Lord Kitchener, his chief; that he was treated to banquets which threatened to prove more fatal to him than battlefields; that there was seen the touching spectacle

of one of the greatest peers in Scotland, the Duke of Athol, with honeyed words of well-deserved praise, girding a magnificent sword of honour, subscribed for by the Highland associations of London, on to the waist of what he proudly termed 'a son of the soil,' the illustrious soldier-son of a Highland crofter —a sword accompanied with the Spanish reminder: 'Draw me not without reason; sheath me not without honour;' that General MacDonald's visit to his native country assumed the form of a triumphal progress, when more swords of honour and even learned degrees were showered upon him; and that the Queen herself even asked this illustrious 'son of the soil' to be one of her personal aides-de-camp and entertained him at Windsor.

But perhaps the crowning wonder of his career was reached when, as a reward for his military services, he was appointed to the command of a district (Sirhind) in India, including among its garrisons the very Gordon Highlanders among the ranks of whom he had commenced his astonishing career as a private, and whose colonel had been his captain when he was but a colour-

sergeant! Rarely had the whirligig of time produced such a strange revolution of personal fortune as this, and never had such a reversal of positions been accepted with less envy or malice.

But the romance of MacDonald's career was not yet ended. For when General Andrew Wauchope fell fighting, at the head of his splendid Highland Brigade, before the Boer entrenchments at Magersfontein, who but 'fighting Mac' should be summoned from India to occupy the proud position once held by Sir Colin Campbell? The former private in the Gordon Highlanders now the commander of the Highland Brigade—was not this a consummation beyond the fertile fancy even of the author of 'The Romance of War'?

CHAPTER IX

TWO ROYAL DUKES

NOT so much, perhaps, on account of their services in the field abroad as for the services which they have rendered to the army at home, two members of our royal family are certainly entitled to rank among our representative 'Soldiers of the Queen'—one the Duke of Cambridge, who is the Queen's first cousin, the other the Duke of Connaught, who is her Majesty's third son. In the persons of those two royal Dukes the old school and the new school of the army are well represented.

His Royal Highness Field-Marshal George, Duke of Cambridge, is the grandson of George III., his father having been that monarch's seventh son. The Duke was born at Hanover in 1819, so that he is now in his eightieth year. At the early age of eighteen he became a colonel in the British army, and

served at various of our outlying garrisons—in Ireland, Gibraltar, and the Ionian Islands. His favourite arm was the mounted one, and in 1852 he was made Inspector-General of Cavalry—a post which he held till 1854, when he went out to the Crimea in command of the very fine First Division composed of the Guards and the Highland Brigade. He had previously crossed to Paris with Lord Raglan to confer with 'Napoleon the Little' as to the conduct of the war.

At this time he was only thirty-five, and had the reputation of being a good and diligent soldier—zealous and devoted to duty. 'He was sagacious,' wrote Kinglake, 'and was more alive than most other men of our land service to passing and coming events. He had a good military eye. He was a great respecter of the public voice in England. . . . He had no dread of innovations, and the beard that clothed his frank manly face was the symbol of his adhesion to a then new revolt against custom. He was much loved, for he was of a genial temper; and his rank was so well helped out by his hereditary faculty of remembering those with whom he once conversed that, far from chilling his

intercourse with other men, it enabled him to give a happy effect to the kindliness of his nature. But, after all, what a General has to do is to try to overcome the enemy by exposing his soldiery to all needful risks. . . . It is well for him to be able to pass through the bloodiest hours of battle with something of a ruthless joy. The Duke of Cambridge was wanting in this kind of truculence, and, however careless of his own life, he was liable to be cruelly wrung with the weight of a command which charged him with the lives of other men. He was of an anxious temperament. . . . Far from straining after occasions for acting on his own judgment, he would have liked, if he could, to receive a series of precise orders which would serve to guide him in every successive change.'

Of Balaclava the Duke was a mere spectator, while both at the Alma and Inkermän he went into action with his Guards, and bore himself with all the personal courage of his royal race, which is undeniable. The Guelphs may often have been deficient in qualities of the head, but rarely in those of the heart. Perhaps their race was best typified by George II., the last English

monarch who ever went forth at the head of his fighting men to do strenuous battle with the alien, and who, as limned for us by Thackeray, 'fought like a Trojan,' drawing his sword before the whole French army at Dettingen and daring it to come on. 'Bravery never goes out of fashion,' wrote the author of the *Four Georges*, and the fashion was handsomely kept up in the Crimea by our late Commander-in-Chief.

At the same time his behaviour as a leader in the Crimea gave rise to much controversy at the time, for the reasons hinted at by Kinglake, and never afterwards had he an opportunity of serving his country on a 'stricken field.' But he managed to serve it very substantially as a soldier for all that. After Inkerman his health gave way and he was invalided home. At the close of the war he succeeded to Viscount Hardinge as Commander-in-Chief, and his appointment on the whole was very popular, not only because he was a royal Duke, but also because he was accounted a very sensible soldier. Six years later he was raised to the rank of Field-Marshal, and was in turn, among other things, made Colonel of the Royal

Artillery and Royal Engineers, 17th Lancers ('Death or Glory Boys'), Scots Guards, and Grenadier Guards.

The Duke held his high and responsible position for nearly forty years, and his tenure of office coincided with the introduction of those military reforms which have made our army what it is. Between the British army at the time it went to the Crimea and at the time it went to Khartoum there was an immense difference, and the changes which made this difference possible were all introduced under, if not perhaps all initiated by, the Duke of Cambridge. Lord Wolseley is reaping the harvest which was sown in the time of his predecessor at the Horse Guards, under whom the War Office improved the efficiency of the army by reorganising itself and creating a General Staff, by abolishing the purchase of commissions, and raising the standard of education among our officers. But more radical in their nature than any other reforms were the introduction of short service and the territorial system of regiments with linked battalions, and the creation of an army reserve. Under the Duke the British

soldier had come to be better paid, fed, armed, housed, and treated generally than he had ever been before; while the British officer had also made great progress in every respect, rising to quite as high a scientific level in his calling as his comrades of the Continent.

In the face of these results it is absurd to pretend, as some of the Duke's critical detractors did, that he remained an obstinate representative of the 'bow and arrow' school of soldiering, his motto ever having been, as he himself once said, that 'reforms are desirable when necessary.' It is, perhaps, possible that H.R.H. may have been sometimes rather slow to recognise the necessity, and consequent desirability, of army reforms; but surely it was better that the reformation of such a machine should have been proceeded with slowly, if surely, than with the risky haste of rampant innovators. Instead of sneering at the Duke as the champion of an obsolete 'bow and arrow' school of warfare, it might have perhaps been more appropriate of his critics to describe him as a representative of the 'gaiter-button school.'

Essentially a man of detail, he was ever

rather slow, perhaps, to embrace general ideas. Both in mind and character the Duke of Cambridge always bore a striking resemblance to the old German Emperor, to whom his grandson absurdly decreed the title 'Great.' If William I. was great at all, he was only great in small things. He never had the eye of the true commander, the born leader of men, and was ever content to let Moltke plan and carry out all his campaigns. But the grand old Kaiser had his own shining merits. He was punctilious, chivalrous, painstaking, straightforward, tenacious of his purpose, true, loyal, just; and these are also the very virtues which ever distinguished our late Commander-in-Chief. Moreover, he was never guilty of favouritism or nepotism; and, if he had his cantankerous critics outside the army, he ever enjoyed the warmest attachment of those under his command.

As a man it would be impossible, perhaps, to point to a finer type of the bluff, hearty, honest—may I also, without fear of *lèse-majesté*, add Flanders-phrased—Englishman than the Duke of Cambridge, whose honest, rugged features and stalwart frame seem to give him a better title to the designation of

'Farmer George' than his royal ancestor thus fondly called. What would public life, as reflected at its public dinners, have been for the last forty years without our hearty, sturdy, sham-detesting Commander-in-Chief? His speeches have always been a singularly good reflex of the man—being instinct with honesty, plainness, and common sense, if never perhaps dashed with brilliancy. But the average Briton prefers sound sense to oratorical shine. It is not at all improbable that the Duke would have even made a better constitutional king than a commander-in-chief, seeing that, as Kinglake remarked, he has ever been singularly sensitive and deferential to public opinion; and doubtless it was owing to this very quality of mind that he decided to retire from office after a most honourable and useful record of service, at the Horse Guards alone lasting over nearly forty years.

These were the only enemies to whom the Duke had ever yielded—the malevolent clique of unscrupulous calumniators who succeeded in getting him intrigued and worried out of office on the plea that he was no longer keeping abreast with the military

necessities of the time; and by many it was thought that Mr. Gladstone's Government had never done a shabbier thing than when it rewarded the long, conscientious, and meritorious services of the Duke with an empty panegyric from the lips of Mr. Campbell-Bannerman in lieu of a solid pension from the public purse. 'There are two qualities,' said the Liberal Secretary for War, referring to the Duke, 'which in my opinion are the most important that any public man, and especially any public servant, can enjoy. One of them is supposed to be inborn, though I doubt it; the other is acquired. They come, in my opinion, before talent; they are better than zeal; they make genius useful; they fertilise eloquence. They are as rare as they are essential. They are constantly spoken of, but never defined. We know them by the vague titles of common sense and knowledge of the world.'

This empty panegyric of an ungrateful party only excited public feelings of disgust. But the opinion of the country, especially of the army itself, was better voiced by an officer who wrote: 'His voice is strident as ever, his memory unimpaired, his powers of endurance

unusual, his recollection of faces remarkable, and his seat on a charger that of the seasoned dragoon. Throughout the army he is known as the soldier's friend, and Tommy Atkins is no bad judge. A clear head, well-balanced mind, lifelong association with men of the world, and a grand constitution have enabled H.R.H., while adapting himself to his environment, ever to maintain his position as a royal prince without losing the bonhomie of the soldier. Genial by nature, and blessed with a sympathetic heart, the unfortunate have ever found in him a sympathetic listener. He is still as active in the field as in the office, is as good a *raconteur* as listener, is a welcome guest in every circle, and is a charming host. . . . Conservative of military institutions, as is natural in the head of an army with such a history, he has endeavoured to direct rather than impede progress, from whatever quarter it has come. Only at the hands of a future generation can such a long and honourable military career receive adequate justice.'

It is more than probable that our next Commander-in-Chief will be the Duke of Connaught, the third son of the Queen,

whom his parents devoted to the service of the nation in the army, just as his elder brother, the Duke of Edinburgh, had been given to our 'first line of defence,' the navy. After the Prince of Wales, the most popular of the royal princes was undoubtedly the Queen's soldier-son, who, even if he had not been a prince, would have won general popularity as the perfection of an English gentleman. Prince Arthur—a name he acquired from his godfather, the Duke of Wellington—is the most English of all our princes, there being nothing whatever in his accent or appearance suggestive of a German origin. And not only is the prince a perfect English gentleman, he is also a brilliant English soldier, of the hearty winning type of Henry V. as he appeared to his men on the eve of Agincourt, when, with 'cheerful semblance and sweet majesty,' he went the round of his camp—

> Walking from watch to watch, from tent to tent,
> Bids them good morrow with a modest smile,
> And calls them brothers, friends, and countrymen.

Only that royal Harry never had the elaborate military training which was

enjoyed by our royal Arthur. The Academy at Woolwich, which he entered in 1886, in his sixteenth year; a lieutenant's training in the Royal Engineers and the Royal Artillery, and a captaincy in the Rifle Brigade on his twenty-first birthday, followed three years later by a captaincy in the 7th Hussars; a spell of cavalry brigade-major work at Aldershot, and of duty as A.A.G. at Gibraltar; succeeded by the command of a battalion of the Rifle Brigade in Ireland, to which Brigade he was, in his thirtieth year, appointed Colonel-in-Chief with the rank of Major-General—such, in brief, is the professional record of the Duke up to 1880, by which time he was generally regarded as one of the most painstaking and efficient officers in the service; not a mere titular soldier, but one who, by his marriage with Princess Louise of Prussia, had resolved to prove a worthy son-in-law of Prince Frederick Charles, the 'Red Prince,' who had mainly contributed to the victory of Königgrätz, and who had been the valiant captor of Metz.

If the Duke had been less of a true soldier, he never would have been so anxious

for active service in the field, exposing himself as a son of the Queen to all the hardships and dangers of the tented field equally with the humblest soldier. At last he managed to gratify his ambition in this respect, and nothing delighted the nation more than to see the Duke giving up the command of his infantry brigade at Aldershot and assuming the command of the Brigade of Guards which formed part of the perfect little army placed at the disposal of Sir Garnet Wolseley to suppress the rebellion of Arabi Pasha in Egypt. He went through the campaign with the greatest credit, and was present at the actions of Mahuta and Tel-el-Kebir.

From the Queen's journal of her life in the Highlands we learn with what intense anxiety her Majesty was filled for the fate of her soldier-son, who is said to have been always her favourite one—if filial predilection of any kind is possible with such a model mother. 'My thoughts,' she wrote on the eve of Tel-el-Kebir, 'were entirely fixed on Egypt and the coming battle. My nerves were strained to such a pitch by the intensity of my anxiety and suspense that they

seemed to feel as though they were all alive.' Next day, however, came the following most welcome and gratifying telegram from Sir Garnet Wolseley: 'Tel-el-Kebir. From Wolseley to the Queen, Balmoral. Attacked Arabi's position at five this morning. His strongly entrenched position was most bravely and gallantly stormed by the Guards and line, while cavalry and horse artillery worked round their left flank.'

As a matter of positive fact the Guards, who were in reserve at some considerable distance behind 'the line,' had no hand in 'storming' Arabi's entrenchments, and the well-known picture of Mr. Caton Woodville on the subject conveyed the truth of the situation much better than Wolseley's courtier-like despatch, which was of a piece with his other politician-like despatch (the Irish question was agitating the country at the time) announcing that the Royal Irish regiment had been the first to storm the lines of Arabi—an honour which should have been ascribed to the Highland Brigade.

But though the Guards had, strictly speaking, never been in action at Tel-el-Kebir, they were certainly under fire—some

casualties having occurred in their ranks; and it was not at all necessary for Sir Garnet to strain a point of accuracy in order to show that their royal commander had borne himself, according to the testimony of all in his brigade, with a courage worthy of his mother's cousin, who, at the head of his brigade of Guards, had so stoutly assailed the Russians on the slopes of Alma and Inkerman; worthy of his royal ancestor who, at Dettingen, had drawn his sword in view of the whole French army and dared it to come on.

Not less favourable than the high opinion of his nerve and courage which his fellow-officers had formed of the Duke in Egypt was the impression made on all his subordinates during his ensuing term of seven years' service in India, first as commander of the Meerut Division in the Bengal Presidency, and then of the Bombay army. Soldiering of this kind under the burning sun of India is of an extremely trying kind; but the Duke cheerfully submitted to all the hardships of his office, and returned home with the proud consciousness that, as he had been the first of his family to expatriate himself for so long a period in the military service of

his country, so he had also contributed in no small degree by his presence in our eastern Empire to strengthen and popularise the rule of his mother, the Empress-Queen.

After taking a well-earned rest on returning home, he was appointed to succeed Sir Evelyn Wood in the Aldershot command, with the rank of Lieut.-General—an appointment which, as was only natural, raised a great outcry among certain malcontent and malignant critics, who thought that the army was being ruined by favouritism in high places and all the rest of it. But, despising all this anonymous criticism, the Duke settled to his work with a whole-souled devotion, and by the end of his five years' tenure of office he had wrung even from some of those who had formerly been his severest critics the admission that he had made a very good use of his opportunities, and left the Aldershot command even more efficient in some respects than when he took it over.

Like the Duke of Cambridge, he had, among other things, acquired a great name for absolute fairness, as well as for affability combined with dignity, courtesy, clearness, and penetration of mind. His handling of the

northern army during the grand manœuvres of 1898 on Salisbury Plain was admitted by all impartial critics to be admirable; and I, who was present, can at least vouch for the fact that Sir Redvers Buller, who commanded the southern army, admitted at the close of more than one field day that he had simply 'been made a garden ass of' by his royal opponent. Beyond question the Duke had repeatedly out-manœuvred the subsequent commander of the army in South Africa at the colossal-scaled Kriegspiel in Wilts, and conclusively shown that, in addition to having mastered all the details of his profession, he had also developed a high degree of what the Germans call the 'Feldherrliche Blick,' or genius for strategy and tactics, entitling him to rank with commanders of the first order.

Little wonder that, when the Duke waived his right to the ducal crown of his German uncle, the Emperor felt very mortified at the loss of such a brilliant addition to the commanding Generals of the German army. But Germany's loss was England's gain. The Duke of Edinburgh forfeited all the popularity he ever possessed in this country when he deliberately preferred the position of a

petty German potentate to that of a powerful admiral in the British fleet. On the other hand, his brother, the Duke of Connaught, more than doubled the universal esteem in which he was held when,

> In spite of all temptations
> To belong to foreign nations,
> He remained an Englishman,

resigning his right of succession to the ducal throne of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha in favour of his nephew of Albany, and preferring his chance of succeeding to the command of the British army to the certainty of his succeeding to a minor, if wealth-accompanied, German crown.

When next it is a question of appointing our Commander-in-Chief, this patriotic act of self-sacrifice on the part of the Duke of Connaught will be remembered in connection with his still more solid claims to a post which it would delight the British people to see occupied, on the ground of personal merit alone, by a member of the royal family; and it was thought to be a further step on his part in the direction of the Horse Guards when the Duke, baffled in his eager desire

to see active service in South Africa, was consoled with the supreme command of the troops in Ireland in succession to Lord Roberts, when the latter was sent out to supersede Sir Redvers Buller as Generalissimo of all our forces in the field against the Boers.

CHAPTER X

A GROUP OF GENERALS

(SIR FRANCIS GRENFELL, SIR BAKER C. RUSSELL, SIR HENRY BRACKENBURY, SIR FREDERICK CARRINGTON, SIR WILLIAM BUTLER, &c.)

THERE was a time when Lord Wolseley, from the frequency with which he was employed to conduct our 'little wars,' used to be facetiously spoken of as 'our only General.' But in this respect we are now very much better off than before. Lord Wolseley has often been accused of creating a 'set,' a 'gang,' or a 'ring' of favourites; but certain it is at any rate that he has founded a school of followers, just as Moltke did, and that his teaching and example have had the effect of producing a galaxy of minor, if still very meritorious, Generals each of whom would well be worth a separate chapter.

Prominent among those Generals of

whom still greater things may be expected in the future is Sir Francis Grenfell, who now commands the British forces in Egypt, as he was previously Sirdar of the Khedive's army. Grenfell, Kitchener, and Hector MacDonald are indeed the trio who may be said to have been the making of the new Egyptian army, which finally covered itself and its creators with the highest credit on the field of Omdurman. It was a fortunate thing for himself, as well as for Egypt, when Lieut.-Colonel Grenfell first found his way on Lord Wolseley's staff to the valley of the Nile with the army which we landed at Ismalia in 1882, to suppress the rebellion of Arabi. As he afterwards said, 'I owe rank, honours, decorations, and my wife to Egypt,' which was as much his Promised Land as Palestine was to the Children of Israel.

Up till then his chances of distinction had been but few, and his promotion slow. Yet, as far as appearances went, any one would have said that he had in him the making of a great soldier—a man of tall, stalwart, warlike mould, with a touch more of Bismarck than of Moltke in his form and features; a man of the mould to grace a suit of knightly

mail—stern, resolute, fearless, resourceful, brave.

He had commenced his career in 1859 by joining the 60th Rifles, only in time to miss his share in the glory which they gleaned in the Indian Mutiny, and it was nearly twenty years after this before he got his first chance—in the southern part of the Dark Continent which was afterwards to give him a lustrous reputation in the north. As aide-de-camp to Sir Arthur Cunynghame, and in other capacities, Grenfell took a brilliant part in the campaign against the Gaikas and Galekas (1877–1878), when his fighting instincts won him high praise in despatches; and as D.A.A.G. at head-quarters he was present at the battle of Ulundi, when the Zulu power was finally shattered. In 1882 he had a similar appointment on the staff of Lord Wolseley, who, in his despatch after Tel-el-Kebir, recommended Grenfell for promotion as 'a most excellent staff officer, who knows his work thoroughly and does it well.'

Grenfell had now set his foot in Egypt, and, like MacMahon on entering the Malakoff, he may well have exclaimed:

J'y suis, j'y reste'—'here I am, and here I will remain.' He became a brigadier under Evelyn Wood, who had been appointed first British Sirdar of the Egyptian army; and perhaps there was no British officer in all this army better calculated personally than Grenfell to inspire the Fellaheen mind with respect and admiration for the English character. Under such men as Wood, Grenfell, Kitchener, MacDonald, and others, this army had within two years made so much progress towards the perfect military state that, though not yet fit for the front, it was used to secure our line of communications between Cairo and Korti during the Khartoum expedition for the relief of Gordon; and with it Grenfell worked so energetically, wisely, and well, that, on Sir Evelyn Wood's selection to be chief-of-the staff to Wolseley in 1885, he was promoted to be his successor as Sirdar.

Henceforth his career was at once brilliant and rapid. More exultant and aggressive than ever over the fall of Khartoum, the Mahdists threatened to invade Egypt proper, and they would certainly have done so but for the vigilance and valour of Major-

General Grenfell and his frontier field force of 'Gyppies' and Soudanese, stiffened by a leaven of some 2,000 British troops. His first serious encounter was at Ginnis, where, imitating the tactics of Wolseley at Tel-el-Kebir, he attacked the Dervishes at dawn—routing them, and capturing their camp, treasure-chest, and guns—a feat for which he was made a Knight of the Bath. Three years later (1888) he sallied out from Suakim and inflicted a similar bayonet defeat on the Dervishes at Gemaizah; while at Toski next year he gained what was perhaps his most brilliant and effective victory over Hegumi, who had prepared the stratagem which proved so fatal to Hicks Pasha and his host, and who was now in turn slain by Grenfell's avenging arm. Toski was a triumph of masterly tactics, and not only established the character of its victor as a first-rate General, but also the character of the Egyptian army as a first-rate fighting power.

Soon after this Sir Francis surrendered his post as Sirdar to his ablest lieutenant, Kitchener, and returned to England, where he acted for a few years as Inspector-General

of Auxiliary Forces and Recruiting, and then went back to Egypt as commander of the British forces there. It was no doubt very trying for him who had done so much to reorganise the Khedive's army and roll back the northward flowing tide of Mahdist barbarism to see his previous subordinate, Kitchener, entrusted with the final task of causing this flood to disappear in the sands of the desert. But Kitchener had in the meanwhile organised and carried out the preliminary stages of our reconquest of the Soudan; he held in his hand all the strings of action, just as he enjoyed the most perfect confidence of his subordinates; and it was seen that there was no real reason why he should be superseded by his old chief. Besides, it has been said that Grenfell himself insisted on his former subordinate finishing the work which he had already begun—'an act of noble self-abnegation only to be compared to Outram's chivalrous refusal to take the command out of the hands of his junior, Havelock, in the advance on Lucknow.' In any case, Grenfell did all he could to co-operate in the most cordial and effective manner from his base at

Cairo with the lucky commander of the Anglo-Egyptian army, and facilitate by every means in his power its victorious advance on Khartoum.

If Sir Francis Grenfell is one of the finest types of a British infantry commander, Sir Baker Creed Russell may well be regarded as the *beau idéal* of a *beau sabreur* —a dashing cavalry leader who would inspire confidence in any troops—handsome, hearty, bluff, fearless, and quite as keen with his tongue as he is with his sabre. It is said of him that, during his special service in South Africa, he once applied for allowances for another horse to cover the wide district over which he had to travel, and that the authorities, after measuring upon the map, refused the request on the ground that the mileage allowed was only so much 'as the crow flies.' 'I do not,' replied Sir Baker, 'ride a crow; I ride a horse!' When acting as a newspaper-correspondent in the Ashanti campaign, Sir H. M. Stanley spoke of him as 'a resolute, hard-handed man, with vim and nerve in him, a sharp sword for an enemy and a soft tongue for a friend.'

During his forty-four years of service he

has probably seen as much fighting as any soldier of the Queen. His father had been captain in a Highland regiment—the old 73rd, now the second battalion of the 'Black Watch;' but he himself preferred the sabre to the claymore, and this weapon he found in the 6th Dragoon Guards (Carabineers), who had the good fortune to be stationed at Meerut when the Indian Mutiny broke out there. Young Baker Russell—he was only twenty—witnessed its birth, and helped as much as any individual combatant did to bring about its death. He was in many wild cavalry charges, in one of which he had to take the command after his seniors had all been cut down. 'To Lieut. Russell,' wrote his chief, Sir Thomas Seaton, 'who commanded the Dragoons, as well as to his companions in arms, my thanks are specially due for their gallantry in action and the vigour of the pursuit.' Before the Mutiny was over Baker Russell had received such a baptism of fire, such a cold nursing with steel, as had already ripened him into a perfect cavalry leader; and the 13th Hussars were proud to receive him into their ranks.

It is a far cry from Cawnpore to Coomassie, but this was to be the next scene of his exploits. A cavalry soldier by instinct and training, he was nevertheless as eager for, as he was equal to, any kind of fighting; and thus he was sent out to the Gold Coast by Sir Garnet Wolseley in company with Evelyn Wood to raise and organise an infantry force of native levies to serve against the Ashantis. With his fine presence, energy and force of character, inspiring respect and confidence in the native mind, a better selection for the purpose could not have been made; and though his full-blooded and robust physique made him an easy prey to fever, his force of will triumphed over his bodily feebleness, and he led his blacks to victory in more than eight engagements.

After serving as military secretary in Cyprus to Wolseley—no mean judge of soldierly merit—Baker Russell reaped fresh laurels in South Africa, where he distinguished himself by his dash and dare-devil courage in the Zulu war, the final capture of Cetewayo after Ulundi being mainly due to the hotness of his pursuit; and in the ensuing

campaign against Sekukuni, the Basuto chief, it was Russell who finished off the business by leading the force which stormed and captured that savage potentate's mountain stronghold. 'Of Colonel Russell,' wrote Wolseley, 'I cannot speak too highly;' and again after Tel-el-Kebir, 'He is a born cavalry leader.' This compliment had especial reference to his conduct in the star-lit charge of the Household Cavalry at Kassassin, which had the effect of opening up the desert for his chief's night march on Arabi's entrenchments at Tel-el-Kebir. His horse was shot under him, but he was soon in another saddle riding hard at the Egyptian rebels. Appointed a K.C.M.G. for his brilliant services in South Africa, he was now made a Knight of the Bath, and universally recognised as our most dashing *beau sabreur*.

The envy of his brother Generals, he is the idol of his men, and more than ever did he win the heart of Tommy Atkins when, on his return from commanding the troops in Bengal to command the southern district at Portsmouth, he rightly decreed to be 'out of bounds' some public houses where drink had been refused to a couple of perfectly sober

sergeants wearing the Queen's uniform. The man who had quelled the savage pride in South African barbarians was not above teaching such a stern lesson to South of England 'Bungs,' and the British public applauded him for his courage.

After—or rather, in point of rank and precedence, before—the British cavalry, of which Baker Russell is such a conspicuous ornament, comes the Royal Artillery, which has furnished us with one of our foremost Generals in the person of Sir Henry Brackenbury, head of the Ordnance Department. As Baker Russell is our best type of the *beau sabreur*, so Brackenbury may be taken as perhaps our most representative soldier of the scientific class—a man profoundly versed in military history and all the lore and laws of war, with a career behind him—not so picturesque, perhaps, and dramatic as that of fighting men like Wolseley, Roberts, Wood, Stewart, Buller, White, and Russell, but nevertheless equally brilliant in its own way and meritorious in the highest degree.

That career commenced in India during the Mutiny, continued in Ashanti, Cyprus, and South Africa, and culminated in Egypt,

where, in the Khartoum relief expedition, he was appointed chief of the staff with the river column of General Earle; and on the latter being killed, like Wolfe, in the moment of victory he was succeeded in command by Brackenbury, who skilfully led the column towards Abu Hamed, and then down the cataract-broken river back to Korti. 'In this,' wrote Lord Wolseley, 'and throughout the operations in the Soudan, he proved himself to be one of the ablest officers in this service, and he would be a most valuable addition to our present list of general officers.'

When not engaged in the active pursuit of war, Sir Henry was ever employed in its study or its preparation. Thus, as director of the work of the British National Society for Aid to the Sick and Wounded, he was a close if neutral observer of the course of the Franco-German war, from which he brought home many valuable lessons; and his studies in this respect were afterwards supplemented by a residence of several years at Paris as our military attaché. He acted as private secretary to Lord Lytton when Viceroy of India, and in Ireland he counselled the

Viceroy there how to deal with moonlighters and assassins. After the Nile campaign he served for five years as chief of our Military Intelligence Department, a post for which no one has ever been better fitted; and then he went to India as military member of the Viceroy's council, where he proved invaluable to Lord Roberts with his advice as to the strengthening of the North-West frontier. Sir Henry Brackenbury, in fact, is a soldier of the type of Moltke—cool, studious, accomplished, far-seeing, a finished soldier scientist, the kind of man well entitled to the honour of being called 'the brain of an army.'

But if thus Lieut.-General Brackenbury may be regarded as the 'brain of the army, Major-General Sir Frederick Carrington is a very good specimen of its brawn. He has been the fiery 'Rupert of the Rhine' of South Africa, which now claims him as its own, even if it had to borrow him from the 24th Regiment (South Wales Borderers) about a quarter of a century ago. He had joined this regiment eleven years previously, but got no chance of distinction until, in 1875, it was ordered to the Cape and up to Kimberley,

to keep an eye on the rough diamond miners, from whom trouble was apprehended. Those fears proved groundless, but on his way up country Lieutenant Carrington, with his eyes and ears all alert, had learned that the Kaffirs were restless, that the Boers were watching for an opportunity to injure the British, and that the fighting power of the latter required to be increased. He further saw that there was plenty of raw material at Kimberley, young Britons of high and low degree, and of all classes of society, who had missed their one grand opportunity in life and would only be too glad of another. The result was the embodiment by Carrington—a tall, blond, broad-shouldered, heavy-moustachio'd Englishman of the Hengist and Horsa type—of as fine a regiment of rough riders or mounted infantry as ever Cromwell might have desired, albeit there may have been more swearing and gambling in the camp of Carrington's Horse than in that of the Ironsides.

So great was the success of this happy experiment that, on the annexation of the Transvaal in 1877, he was asked to raise two more regiments of the same kind—one

being the Frontier Light Horse, the other Carrington's Horse; and in all the fighting with the black races during the next few years those regiments were ever to the front. In one of their wild headlong charges an eye-witness saw 'Carrington, armed only with a cane, and two hundred yards ahead of every one else, dashing after them as if he had been chasing a fox, instead of well-armed savages. His horse was shot in the jaw, and he extracted the ball with a penknife as calmly as if he were removing a splinter from his own fingers.' In the Basuto war he commanded the Transvaal Volunteer Force, and did admirable work at the storming of Sekukuni's mountain keep. He always seemed to bear a charmed life, did this Berserker horseman, till at last a Basuto slug passed through his body and he was invalided home.

But in England he only remained till 1884, when, now a full Colonel, he returned to Bechuanaland to resume his dare-all exploits under Sir Charles Warren, who placed over 100,000 miles of new territory under British protection, and left Carrington to 'police' it and keep it in good order—

—secure alike from the invasion of Boers and the rebelliousness of blacks. Perhaps his finest creation was the Bechanualand Border Police, with whom he converted chaos into kosmos, and made a fine, fertile, healthy country as large as Spain so safe to travel in that the 'bush could keep the cow.' No wonder that, for his splendid services in Bechuanaland, he was made a K.C.M.G., and that five years later he was recalled to the Cape to act as military adviser to the Government, being afterwards given a command at Gibraltar.

But from this peaceful post on the Mediterranean he was presently summoned back to South Africa to command the forces for the suppression of the Matabele rebellion, a task which he performed with his usual brilliancy, reconquering a country equal in area to Italy, Spain, and France combined, and defended by nearly 30,000 savage warriors. Verily this quondam lieutenant of the South Wales Borderers had deserved well of his country by becoming an 'empire-maker' in the strictest sense of the term. But for the example of General Carrington we probably never should have had such

men as the Plumers and Baden-Powells who are now so brilliantly emulating the fame of their master in South African warfare in the very fields where he won his well-earned renown.

Brackenbury is a man of brain; Carrington, before all things, a man of brawn; but in Major-General Sir William Francis Butler, that stout stalwart Irish soldier, you have both these qualities combined in a singularly happy degree. Yet he is also a soldier of the sentimental and even political type, who deliberately turned his back on the very finest chance that was ever presented to him —the chance of taking a prominent part in the war for the establishment of British paramountcy all over South Africa.

Perhaps there is no British General who is so glib with his tongue and with his pen as Sir William Butler, the husband of the distinguished painter of the 'Roll Call,' and the author, among other things, of 'The Great Lone Land' and 'The Wild North Land,' in which he recorded his experiences of buffalo hunting on the prairies, and of Lord Wolseley's Red River Expedition; 'Akimfoo,' which is a similar record of his Ashanti

adventures; 'The Campaign of the Cataracts,' as well as lives of Sir C. Napier and Sir George Pomeroy Colley, the martyr of Majuba.

These works pretty well cover the campaigning ground trodden by Sir William, who, as a 'Tipperary Boy,' fond of opposition for its own sake, and a believer in the principle that 'the profession of arms on paper is at any time an anomaly,' joined the 69th Regiment in 1858, though it was twelve years before he had his first chance of active service with Wolseley in Canada. His application being rejected by the Horse Guards, Butler went straight to Toronto and 'worked the oracle' with Sir Garnet himself, who sent him forward into the wilderness much in the same way as he afterwards despatched Kitchener into the Korosko desert ahead of the Nile Expedition. His mission was successful, as was also a subsequent one of the same kind to the Saskatchewan Indians. Less successful was his perilous errand as a sort of soldier-diplomatist to the Akims, to induce them to join the British in their advance on Ashanti, and he was unfortunate enough to miss the last fight at Coomassie.

In the Zulu war he was only employed on staff service at the base, Durban—a post not wholly congenial to the pugnacious Irishman; but in the Egyptian campaign of 1882 he was present at all the actions, ending with Tel-el-Kebir, while in the Khartoum Relief Expedition Lord Wolseley was mainly indebted to him for the speed with which the four hundred Canadian boats were placed upon the Nile. Leaving the boats for the saddle, he commanded the cavalry which accompanied the River Column of General Earle, and by one brilliant flank attack on the Dervishes routed them and captured their camp. It was by a dashing charge of the same kind on the rear of the Arabs at Ginnis that he captured their guns, standards, and camp.

In 1890 he was appointed to the command of the garrison of Alexandria, whence, several years later, he was promoted to Dover, and from Dover he was sent to command at the Cape. But his political sympathies were to a great extent with the Boers, as they had previously been—so it was said—with the Nationalists, or Fenians, of his native country; and when war became

imminent he resigned his post rather than become the instrument of a policy which he disapproved, in spite of the duty prescribed to all soldiers :

> Theirs not to reason why,
> Theirs but to do or die.

But General Butler reasoned and resigned, much, it is said, to his disgust and abiding disappointment on his return home to take up the South-Western command, at finding that the leading *rôle* which might have been assigned to him had been given to Generals like Lord Methuen, Sir Francis Clery, Sir William Gatacre, Sir Charles Warren, Kelly-Kenny, and Tucker—half a dozen of our most promising commanders ; though they are not superior either in experience or exploits to such past masters of Indian warfare as Sir William Lockhart, the nephew of Scott's biographer, who now commands our forces in the Queen's Eastern Empire, or to Sir Robert Low, of Clatto, in the shire of Fife, the conqueror of the Chitral campaign, which the French military *attaché* in London officially pronounced to be 'a perfect gem of Indian warfare.'

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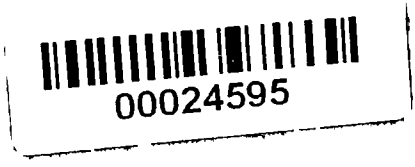

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